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# JEAN-PAUL MARAT

## THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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## CHAPTER I

### MARAT'S EARLY YEARS

JEAN-PAUL MARAT, or Mara, the "t" having been added to give the name a French look, was born at the village of Boudry, on the lake of Neuchâtel, the present Swiss canton of that name being then a fief of the Prussian crown. The register of his birth and baptism is as follows :—  
"Jean-Paul Mara, son of M. Jean-Paul Mara, proselyte of Cagliari, in Sardinia, and of Mme. Louise Cabrol, of Geneva, was born on the 24th of May, and has been baptized on the 8th of June, 1743, having no godfather and having for godmother Mme. Cabrol, grandmother of the infant." His father thus belonged to the population of mixed race and Italian speech inhabiting one of the most interesting insular seats of early European civilisation. He was made a citizen of Geneva on the 10th of March 1741, having renounced his hereditary faith in favour of the Calvinism of his adopted city.

The name "Mara," taken in conjunction with his native country, suggests some interesting



THE HOUSE AT BOUDRY WHERE MARAT WAS BORN.



ever, and called himself M. de Boudry, after his native place. The elder sister Marie was born at Boudry in 1746.

The year after his marriage, the elder Mara, having obtained a position in a manufactory of Indian stuffs at Boudry, near the town of Neuchâtel, as designer or chemist, or possibly in both capacities, migrated thither with his wife. His employment for some reason or other coming to an end, he moved in 1754 to the neighbouring town of Neuchâtel. The registers at this place for that year contain a notice to the effect that "the sieur Jean Mara, native of Cagliari in Sardinia, proselyte, designer, and master of the Italian and Spanish languages, having sought the right of domicile in the town, his request was adjourned for authentic certificates of his good-conduct." These must have proved satisfactory, as we shortly afterwards find him admitted as an inhabitant with full rights. His occupation now was that of professor of languages. Here was born his son David, whose baptism is recorded for the date 21st February 1756. An indication of the good repute in which the family stood is afforded by the fact that the godfather and godmother were M. David Huguenin, Councillor of State and Chancellor, and his wife. The Huguenins are, it may be mentioned, a very old stock of Neuchâtel. Charlotte-Albertine Mara was born here in 1760, and Jean-Pierre in 1767.

In 1768, shortly after the disturbances in which the Advocate-General lost his life, Marat's father left the town and returned to the city of his adoption, Geneva, apparently with the hope of bettering his position. The Mara family left enemies behind them, however, for they had not long arrived when the following letter was received by Mme. Mara :—

NEUCHÂTEL, 19th March 1768.

MADAM—As you have the most diabolical tongue that we have ever had in our town, and as you are a notorious liar and slanderer, who are never tired of injuring your neighbours by your tongue, I shall take care to make you known at Geneva. I have already written to different persons, and have painted you in your true colours, as also your children, who resemble you. Your one-eyed son [apparently David] is a notorious ragamuffin. It is he who did the most injury to the Advocate-General. Yes, I say once more that you are a notorious liar, a most evil tongue, a slanderess, a woman of no character, whom every one despises, and who is only too despicable. Your husband is no better. He is a downright hypocrite and canting humbug (*caffard*). Adieu. Alter your conduct. I have forgotten to tell you that everywhere I can I shall expose you. I have already written anonymously to four persons to tell them what you are, and I have still ten letters to write to describe you and your children, not forgetting your scoundrel and hypocrite of a husband. I had intended to write to M. Joly, but I cannot do so. Moderate your infernal and diabolical tongue. This is not all. There are many other things that are being prepared for you.

On another sheet in the same handwriting is the following postscript :—

Your daughters are both fit to be at Geneva, no less than your husband. As to those who will come from the thirteen cantons and from the town-hall, I will make you known to them, please God, so that they may tear out your tongue, as they have torn out the eye of your rascal of a son. Your husband will pose at Geneva as the honest man, but it will not be long before you are known. Whatever happens, I shall write as many anonymous letters as I can. There are several children here who would like to pay you out. They will make it as hot for you as they can. You deserve it. Adieu, diabolical tongue, calumniator, impostor, liar, slanderess, beggarly wretch, renegade's wife !

Mara senior enclosed this cowardly letter of anonymous abuse in one of his own to the Prussian Vice-Governor and his Council of State, and wrote also to the Secretary of State, protesting the falsity of the charges, and claiming that the author or authoress of the letter should be found out and punished. He professed himself to have behaved loyally to "His Majesty the King of Prussia" during his residence at Neuchâtel, and gives, as the only reason he can think of for any enmity felt against himself by any inhabitants of the town, the fact that he had disapproved of their "illegal, unnatural, and imprudent conduct." Here he obviously refers to the revolt. Beyond this he knows of nothing to justify hatred on the part of any one

against him or his. It is not known whether a search was made, nor whether, if made, it resulted in the discovery of the delinquent.

In No. 98 of his *Journal de la République française*, Marat has left the following account of his youth :—

Born with an impressionable nature, a fiery imagination, a hot, frank, and tenacious temperament, an upright mind, a heart open to every lofty passion, and above all to the love of fame, I have never done anything to pervert or destroy these gifts of nature, but have done everything to cultivate them.

By an exceptional good fortune I have had the advantage of receiving a careful education in my father's house, of escaping all the vicious habits of childhood that enervate and degrade a man, of avoiding all the excesses of youth, and of arriving at manhood without having abandoned myself to the whirlwind of the passions. I was pure at the age of twenty-one, and had already for a long time past been given to the meditation of the study.

The only passion that devoured my mind was the love of fame ; but as yet it was only a fire smouldering under the ashes.

The stamp of my mind has been impressed upon me by nature, but it is to my mother that I owe the development of my character. This good woman, whose loss I still deplore, trained my early years ; she alone caused benevolence to expand in my heart. It was through my hands that she caused the succour that she gave to the indigent to pass, and the tone of interest she displayed in speaking with them inspired me with her own feelings.

Upon the love of humanity is based the love of justice, for the notion of what is just comes from senti-

## EARLY YEARS

ment as much as from reason. My moral sense was already developed at the age of eight. Even then, I could not bear to behold ill-treatment practised upon another ; the sight of cruelty filled me with indignation, and an injustice always made my blood boil with a feeling as of a personal outrage.

During my early years, my constitution was very delicate ; moreover, I never knew either petulance or obstinacy or the games of childhood. Docile and diligent, my masters obtained everything from me by gentleness. I was only chastised once, and the resentment at an unjust humiliation made such an impression upon me that it was found impossible to bring me again under my instructor's authority. I remained two whole days without taking nourishment. I was then eleven years old, and the strength of my character may be estimated from this single trait. My parents not having been able to bend me, and the paternal authority believing itself compromised, I was locked up in a room ; unable to resist the indignation that choked me, I opened the casement and flung myself into the street ; happily the casement was not high, but I did not fail to hurt myself seriously in the fall, and I bear the mark on my forehead to this day.

The shallow men who reproach me with being a *tête* (obstinate fellow) will see from this that I was such at an early age ; but they will refuse perhaps to believe that at this time of life I was devoured by the love of fame ; a passion that has often changed its object at different periods of my life, but which has never quitted me for a moment. At five years of age, I wanted to be a schoolmaster ; at fifteen a professor ; at eighteen an author ; and at twenty a creative genius.

This is what nature and the lessons of my childhood have made me. Circumstances and reflection have done the rest.

## MARAT

I was reflective at fifteen, an observer at eighteen, a thinker at twenty-one. At the age of ten I contracted the habit of a studious life ; mental work has become a veritable necessity for me, even in illness, and my greatest pleasures I have found in meditation.

The foregoing is our only authentic information concerning the childhood and early youth of Marat. As regards the self-complacency of the extract, somewhat offensive to the modern mind, three things are to be borne in mind—firstly, the stilted and inflated style of the eighteenth century, especially in personal matters ; secondly, the nationality of the writer, for in spite of his birthplace Marat was essentially a Frenchman by temperament and education ; and thirdly, the virulent personal attacks that called forth the autobiographical declaration in question. As an illustration of how calumny pursued the “People’s Friend” even into his early years, we may take the statement of a certain Fauche-Borel that he had seen Marat as a tiny child at Neuchâtel exciting a crowd of little ragamuffins to deeds of violence of which his own hands were incapable. Unfortunately, the worthy Fauche-Borel is a little too detailed in his information. He states that it was on the occasion of the outbreak in which the Advocate-General Gaudot was killed by the populace. Now, it happens that this historical incident occurred in the year 1768, when Marat was not a child at all, but a man of five-and-twenty, who had been for years absent from his native land. The truth would

appear to be that Marat's young brother, David, *was* involved in this matter, but only to the extent, as the Neuchâtel archives indicate, of being charged with "throwing stones."

Jean-Paul Marat left the paternal roof soon after the completion of his sixteenth year. His object was probably to find a school or university where he might pursue the studies preparatory to the practice of medicine. Where he immediately went, however, is doubtful. Above all, it is not known where he received his first medical degree, an uncertainty that has enabled Michelet and other detractors to cast doubts upon the fact of his having ever graduated in medicine at all. As will be subsequently seen, however, such doubts are not tenable in the face of facts we shall deal with.

The first places to which we can distinctly trace him by his own recorded account are Toulouse and Bordeaux, at the latter of which towns he stayed two years, studying, as he says, medicine, literature, philosophy, and politics. It was perhaps at this time that he made his first attempt in literature in the form of a romance entitled *The Adventures of the Young Count Potowski*. The fact that the letters of which the work is composed bear later dates does not necessarily militate against the assumption that it was written about that time, for in a work of fiction of this character it might quite conceivably have been done on purpose. The plot, which is simple enough, is as follows. A young

Polish nobleman is in love with the daughter of one of his father's friends. All goes well, and the marriage is about to be celebrated, when suddenly a civil war breaks out with the object of freeing Poland from the Russian yoke. The one family is on the side of the Russian authorities; the other on that of the Polish patriots. Hence, mortal enmity arises between them. Gustave, the hero, is induced by his father to enlist under the Confederate banner. Meanwhile, the bride, Lysille, and her mother take refuge in flight to foreign lands. Episodes are introduced illustrating the grief of the lovers and the fortunes of war. The intrigues of a countess, who is herself in love with the young nobleman, also play a part. Finally, hostilities come to an end, and the course of true love runs smoothly into marriage. The narrative is interrupted by dissertations on the perfidy of monarchs who stir up strife, and on the new political principles then agitating men's minds. The work lacks originality, and the execution is distinctly amateurish. Marat himself doubtless felt this, as it remained unpublished during his lifetime, and first saw the light in 1847 as a *feuilleton* in the *Siècle* newspaper, the original manuscript having been purchased, as was alleged, by a friend of the proprietor of that journal from Marat's widow, Simonne Evrard, shortly before her death. In 1848 the romance was issued independently in two volumes.

Marat eventually reached Paris, where he



doubtless pursued his studies in medicine. After some time employed in scientific research, he migrated to London, the city that until shortly before the outbreak of the Revolution was the one in which he spent most of his time. On this occasion, however, he did not continue in the English metropolis, leaving apparently in a short time for Dublin, where he remained a year, going thence to Edinburgh, possibly in a tutorial capacity, and probably visiting St. Andrews. Marat then set sail for Holland, stopping some time in its chief cities, such as the Hague, Utrecht, and Amsterdam. After this he returned again to London, probably about 1765, some eleven years since his departure from Boudry. His residence was in Church Street, Soho, the Harley Street of that day. The only knowledge we have of Marat's family during this time is that his mother died soon after the birth of her youngest child, of whom mention has already been made. Obscure as these years are also in the lifetime of Marat himself, we have evidence enough that they were unremittingly employed in professional medical work and study, that he made the acquaintance of many distinguished persons in the scientific world, and that he had relations, both literary and personal, with many learned bodies, amongst others the Royal Society of London, and the Academies of Berlin, Stockholm, St. Petersburg, and Madrid.

## CHAPTER II

### MARAT IN ENGLAND

MARAT's life in England is indeed little less obscure than the record of his travels on the Continent. In the one as in the other case the true sequence of his sojourns and of the events connected with them is difficult to determine. It is certain, however, that Marat's public literary activity seriously began in 1772, and began in the English language. Hitherto this had been confined to a few scientific tracts. In acknowledging the manuscript of Marat's short treatise on the Soul, Lord Lyttelton, writing from his town house, Hill Street, Piccadilly, on the 19th of November 1772, says :—

In reading with attention the manuscript you have been good enough to send me, I have much admired the author's learning and talents. This work contains many things beyond the limits of my criticism, ignorant as I am indeed of anatomy and little versed in matters of metaphysics ; but I owe it to the marks of esteem you have wished to show me, and to the honour you have done me in lending me your manuscript before

publication, to inform you frankly of objections that may be made either to the matter or to the style ; I should be very glad to consult you as to some passages that need enlightenment, if you can put on one side the reasons that make you wish to preserve an incognito, up to the point of doing me the honour of a visit on Sunday at eleven in the morning. Rest assured that your secret will not be divulged, Sir, by your very honoured and obedient servant,  
LYTTELTON.

The reports of Marat's life in England are very fragmentary, and in most cases obviously false. They are given here for what they are worth. He is alleged to have been under-master at Warrington Academy, about 1766 or 1767, in company with the famous chemist Priestley. Thence he went, it is said, to Oxford, and an attempt has been made to identify him, on the strength of an alias, with a certain Jean-Pierre le Maître, who was convicted of a theft from the Ashmolean Museum in the year 1768. The statement goes that the thief fled to Ireland, was arrested in Dublin, and brought back to Oxford, where he was tried and convicted. He had to serve his sentence on the pontoons at Woolwich, but is said to have been recognised by an old pupil, who procured his liberation. There is no evidence whatever that this mysterious thief was Marat. The names are different, and the plausibility of the identification rests mainly on the similarity in the initials.

Another story has it that Marat, through

influence, became a librarian at Bristol, and that he subsequently went bankrupt and was incarcerated in the debtors' prison there, but was subsequently liberated by the instrumentality of the "Society for the Relief of Debtors Imprisoned for Small Sums." This story again should be negatively disproved by the fact that a careful search in the local court registers has failed to disclose the name of Marat or any name bearing a resemblance. It is only feebly corroborated by the statement of one of the members of this Debtors' Relief Society that he recognised his old protégé in the person of Marat in the Convention in 1792, after twenty years!—as Mr. Morse Stephens has observed, considering the circumstances, an incredible story enough!

The next we hear of this imaginary Marat is that he was teaching embroidery *au tambour* at Edinburgh under the name of John White. Here again there is no evidence that Marat was in any way identical with John White. It is further stated that, falling into debt, this John White fled from Edinburgh to Newcastle, where he was imprisoned. The incident of his pecuniary troubles in Newcastle is founded upon a legal document, called a *cessio bonorum*, which has been traced in that town, and which is the chief authority for the statement that Marat, whom he was believed to be, was a master at Warrington. The *cessio* appears to have been refused by the creditors. They, however, eventually wearied of the affair and set the debtor at

liberty after some months, who then resided for a while in the environs of Newcastle.

Such are the traditions. From a chronological point of view, they will hardly bear investigation. That Marat at an early period of his career might have been in money difficulties is conceivable, but we know for a positive fact that in the year 1776 he was practising as physician in a fashionable district of London with an honorary degree that had been conferred on him the previous year, and it is in the highest degree improbable that he should have been reduced to pecuniary straits shortly afterwards. The stories as to his debts rest on the weakest evidence. Were there a germ of truth in them, it still must not be forgotten that imprisonment for debt was in the last century the lot of many a worthy man, and that its infliction was a means often resorted to by creditors as a regular thing for the most trivial delays in payment.

The identification with the thief Le Maître, so utterly unfounded and wanton, is clearly a piece of anti-Jacobin spite. The accusation of stealing contradicts the whole tenor of Marat's character, for his disinterestedness in money matters has been admitted even by the more honest of his adversaries. Moreover, Marat himself at a later period in the *Ami du Peuple*, in defending himself against certain personal attacks, *expressly challenges* his enemies to search the court records of *any town* where he had resided for evidence of his having been *so much as*

*accused* of any crime. Brissot, too, subsequently Marat's bitterest enemy, was at this time in London and well acquainted with Marat, and would certainly not have kept silence on even a suspicion against the "People's Friend" had he ever heard of such. But apart from this, chronological evidence alone suffices to render the attempted identification of Le Maître with Marat ridiculous. The date of the sentence passed on Le Maître is given as March 1777. Now it so happens that it was on the 24th of June of that year that the Count d'Artois appointed Marat the physician of his Bodyguard. Surely no one can credit the notion that such a post in the household of the French king's brother could be obtained by an escaped convict, or indeed by any man whose personal character and career were not vouched for beyond all shadow of doubt.

As for the nature of the appointment, there is reason to regard it as one of high distinction. An official residence was placed at its holder's disposal. The name of this residence, *Aux Ecuries*, gave rise to the nicknames that Carlyle is so anxious to fasten upon Marat's memory of "dog-leech," "horse-leech," etc., as though his duties need have been veterinary in character merely because his official house was near the stable-yard. It may be taken for granted, on the other hand, that he was the resident medical man of the royal household, and we learn from other sources that he was allowed to have at the same time an

outside practice amongst the aristocratic and wealthy. His admitted success in this practice hardly accords with the common notion of a surgeon whose attention has been mainly directed to horses or dogs, and we can therefore dismiss with contempt Carlyle's malignant determination to attach to Marat's work the various labels drawn from the stables and kennels.

We may mention that, while in London, Marat became a Freemason. A diploma given him in this capacity is described as "a diploma on parchment as member of the Grand Lodge of Freemasons of London, delivered to Marat on 15th July 1774, the day of his reception." On the back there is a certificate of the affiliation of Marat to the Lodge *La Bien-Aimée* of Amsterdam, dated 12th October 1774. This Lodge, according to Mr. H. Sadler, was constituted in 1753, probably by the Grand Lodge of England, but in 1776 it was under "The Grand Lodge of the Seven United Provinces." Marat's name has not, however, yet been traced in the register of the London Lodges, most of which did not at that period record the names of their members.

It remains to say a few words as to Marat's political activity while in England. Although doubtless begun previously, this culminated in the publication of his *Chains of Slavery* in 1774, from the preface to the French translation of which, issued eighteen years later in 1792, we get the following facts. "At a time," writes Marat, "when the French had no country, I was

anxious to contribute to the triumph of liberty in a country which seemed its last asylum. A Parliament notorious for its venality was reaching its close, and upon the new one about to be elected all my hopes rested." The Parliament referred to was the first Parliament of Lord North. Marat, in accordance with the view above expressed, determined to throw himself into the struggle, selecting the polemical essay as his weapon. The object was "to paint the inestimable advantages of liberty, the frightful evils of despotism, etc." Mindful of the insularity of the English nation, he states that he took nearly all his illustrations from English history. "To devour," he writes, "thirty mortal volumes, to make extracts from them, to adapt the work, to translate and to print it, was all a matter of three months." During this time he laboured regularly twenty-one hours a day, allowing scarcely two hours for sleep, and keeping himself up with an excessive use of coffee, which, as he considered, more than the work itself, contributed to the nervous collapse which ensued on the completion of his book. Immediately after having sent the MS. to the printer, Marat, as he relates, fell into a kind of stupor, all his faculties dazed, his memory gone, and in short lay in a deplorable mental and physical state for thirteen whole days, only recovering "by the aid of music and repose." As soon as he was in a condition to attend to his affairs, his first concern was to ascertain the



fate of his book. To his<sup>st</sup> astonishment and disgust he found it had not yet appeared. He went from one publisher to another; none seemed inclined to undertake negotiating the advertisement or sale of the book—not even on Marat's offering to advance the money for expenses himself. Only one so much as hinted at a reason. This was a Mr. Woodfall, who suggested that the "discourse to the electors of Great Britain," which served as an introduction, and which we shall give *in extenso* in another chapter, might have something to do with the refusal. "It was only too obvious," says Marat, "that these men had been bought up." To test the matter, Marat offered ten guineas for a single announcement instead of five shillings, the usual figure. The anxiety of the Prince of Wales's bookseller to have his name struck out of the list of subscribers to the book set Marat on the right track. He discovered that the minister, Lord North, had put pressure on all concerned in the publication; that the Scotch printing firm employed was attached to Lord North's service, and had sent on the proofs to him. The printer himself appears to have advised Marat to withdraw the book, as it would only lead to unpleasantness for him. "Instructed," says Marat, "by the case of Wilkes of the things of which an audacious minister is capable, and not being disposed to peaceably sell him the right to outrage me, I slept during six weeks with a brace of pistols under my pillow, determined to

receive suitably any State emissary who might be sent to seize my papers. But nothing happened. The minister, informed as to my character, thought it prudent to confine himself to cunning, the more so as being a foreigner he might presume me to be ignorant of the means of disconcerting his plans." Finding it impossible to circulate his book in the ordinary way through the market, Marat determined to present almost the entire edition to the patriotic societies of the north of England, these being reputed "the purest of the kingdom." The copies were sent by the "public coaches." But Lord North got wind of this. Marat found himself, as he states, surrounded with spies, who endeavoured to corrupt his landlord and his servants. In addition, all his letters, even those from his family, were intercepted. The sudden suppression of his correspondence was too much for Marat. He determined to play the Government a trick, so going to Holland from London, he returned immediately to a port in the north of England, seizing the opportunity of visiting the patriotic societies to whom he had sent his book. He betook himself successively to Carlisle, Berwick, and Newcastle. There he learnt more about the tricks of the Government concerning him. He found that three of the societies in question had sent him "letters of affiliation" in a "golden box," which had, during his absence, been left with his publisher, and removed thence by the ministerial emissaries in his name. The New-

castle society in addition insisted on contributing to the expense of the edition. All the societies decreed him the "civic crown." But the Government had at least succeeded in stopping the circulation of the book in time for the elections. In fact, Marat states that he was subsequently informed by one of his patients, who was a member of Parliament, that Lord North had expended more than eight thousand guineas in achieving this object. Afterwards the Government relaxed its energy. Marat concludes by comparing the persecutions he had suffered eighteen years before under the Government of George III., with those he had recently had to endure under that of Louis XVI.

To sum up the facts and probabilities respecting Marat's ten or twelve years' residence in London :—He came, probably not without introductions, about 1765 to establish a medical practice in the British metropolis. This he succeeded in doing. At the same time, in addition to occasional excursions into politics, he took an active interest in general science, particularly experimental physics, as well as in philosophical literature, and, as he seems to imply, in music. While in London he was a welcome guest in the best scientific, literary, and artistic circles of the time, amongst them in that of Angelica Kaufmann, in Golden Square. His practice and his name as a physician increasing, his reputation spread far beyond his immediate circle, till at length the post of physician to the *Garde du*

*Corps* in the Comte d'Artois' household becoming vacant, the Comte was advised to offer it to the distinguished French-speaking doctor then practising in London. This was done. The offer was accepted, and Marat left London for Paris in the early summer of 1777.

## CHAPTER III

### MARAT : PHILOSOPHER, MAN OF SCIENCE, AND PHYSICIAN

THE first work in which Marat deals with philosophical problems was a short treatise already referred to, entitled *An Essay on the Human Soul*, published in 1772. In 1773 he expanded it into a large book, bearing the title *A Philosophical Essay on Man, or the Principles and the Laws of the Influence of the Soul on the Body and the Body on the Soul*. This book, like the previous one, was published in the English language, with which Marat by this time had acquired great familiarity. Indeed, so thoroughly idiomatic is the style that one can hardly suppose that his English writings were not either written or supervised by some native. Two years later, in 1775, he produced a French edition, enlarged in three volumes.

As philosopher, Marat was a pronounced dualist, believing firmly in the two Cartesian substances. In perfect consistency with this theory was his eighteenth-century Deism. Like

his precursor, Rousseau, though with more logic and less sentiment but greater philosophical knowledge, he believed in a God "out of the machine," the eighteenth-century God of Nature, who regulated Nature in the same way as the soul was supposed to regulate the body. At the same time, Marat starts his researches from the point of view of Cartesian mechanism, and does not pretend to pronounce on the absolute nature of the soul. In true Cartesian fashion he treats the human body as the machine serving as the organ of the soul. The work is divided into four sections. The first is purely anatomical. The second treats of the human soul. "The body vegetates left to itself; it is the soul alone that gives true life to its marvellous mechanism; an invisible spring, rendering our members active, producing all their harmonious movements, all those rapid and prodigious movements that make the body so adroit and admirable a machine." And again, "It is the soul that renders man intelligent and free."

The second section contains a vigorous and detailed polemic with Helvétius, who, as is well known, would derive the passions from the system of physical sensations. It is the task of the third section, which is divided into two parts, to deal respectively with the modifying influence of the bodily machine on the indwelling soul and of the soul upon the physical mechanism. In this section the phenomena of sleep and dreaming are expatiated upon, as illustrating the

author's theses. The soul participates in the infirmities of old age, of bodily disease, of strong drink, etc. Men of coarse bodily structure enjoy coarse amusements and blatant pleasures, garish colours, martial music, and strong flavours. On the contrary, persons of delicate bodily constitution love soft colours, half-tints, plaintive music, "the tender perfume of the rose and the jasmine." The fourth section of the book deals with the causes and *modus operandi* of the influence of body and soul on each other, and contains a general statement of the author's position, which is as follows :—There neither is nor can be any direct relation between the soul and body, each being in its nature, *sui generis*, distinct from the other. Yet that there *are* reciprocal relations he had already maintained. Hence these relations, since they are not immediate, must be brought about through the mediatisation of some third agent or influence. This *tertium quid* is, according to Marat, what he terms the "nervous fluids," by which he understands a subtle ether or substance, "neither grossly material, like the body, nor purely immaterial, like the soul," but occupying a position between the two, which is the vivifying power of living nerve-substance, and which is concentrated in its greatest intensity in the brain. The movements of this mysterious fluid combine with the elasticity of the fibres and the physical quality of the various organs affected, upon which moral and physical peculiarities depend.

Marat's psychological system was in no

way original. Notwithstanding his derogatory references to Descartes, it was based in all important points upon the system of Descartes, and might have been written, save for certain minor details, chiefly of illustration, by any Cartesian of a corresponding amount of physiological knowledge, at any period between, let us say, the middle of the sixteenth and the close of the eighteenth century.

The French version which Marat wrote of this work was, like most other literary productions of the period, sent to Voltaire, and was honoured by a fairly long, if caustic, criticism from the great god of contemporary letters. The style of the book is held up to ridicule, and passages are quoted with the hint that they are nothing better than rhetorical verbiage. Voltaire is especially severe on Marat's supercilious treatment of the great lights of thought that came in his way, such as Locke, Malebranche, Condillac, and Helvétius. A certain piece of "fine writing" is the special object of Voltaire's sarcasm. Marat apostrophises the power of thought, and says that "thought makes man to live in the past, the present, and the future, raises him above sensible objects, transports him to vast fields of imagination, expands, so to say, his eyes to the limits of the universe, discovers for him new worlds, and makes him to enjoy nothingness itself." Voltaire felicitates the author on being able to enjoy nothingness. "It is a great empire," he says, "reign there, but



insult a little less those who are something." Referring to a passage on "true force of soul," in which Marat refuses this attribute to the "boiling Achilles, the furious Alexander, the austere Cato," although in another part of the book he had spoken eulogistically of the dauntlessness of these classical heroes, Voltaire observes that if the worthy doctor is given to contradicting himself thus in his consultations, he will not be often called in by his colleagues.

Voltaire's criticism seems to have rankled in the mind of Marat for a long time. Brissot relates (*Mémoires*, pp. 190 *sqq.*) that Marat was deeply offended at a eulogy of Voltaire, contained in his (Brissot's) *Théorie des lois criminelles*, and that he almost threatened a rupture of the friendship that then existed between them, on the ground of Brissot's having praised a man who had mortally injured him by attacking one of his works in a cowardly and stupid manner, as he termed it. From a latter-day point of view the piece of stilted, rhetorical bombast in question would have more injured Brissot's reputation for good taste than have damaged Marat by its laudatory periods as regards his critic. The modern man will probably think Voltaire justified in his criticism of Marat's style in the work in question, but he will also have his opinion on the eighteenth-century taste in general which could tolerate, and on the particular taste of Brissot who could write, such stuff as the following:—"It is to thee, sublime Voltaire, to thee who

hast breathed into our century the fire of thy genius, hast created it, hast vivified it ; it is to thee that the universe owes the pure light that illumines it ; at thy force, Truth has regained her torch, Reason her pinion ! ” and so forth.

Our author published the French version of his essay on “Man” at Amsterdam, in accordance with the usual practice of the time in the case of books on serious subjects. During his residence in Paris, Marat threw himself with ardour into scientific pursuits, especially those connected with investigations into electricity and light. His medical studies had led him to consider the question of electricity as a curative agent. The result of these studies was published by him under the title *Découvertes de M. Marat sur le feu, l'électricité et la lumière*. It was only a small brochure of thirty-eight pages octavo, but it received the approbation and honourable mention of the French Academy of Sciences. At the same time, the Academy rejected the theory it sought to establish, and this slight, as Marat considered it, was the origin of his quarrel with that institution. The object of the essay was to prove the existence of an *igneous fluid*. Marat describes experiments that had taken place with an instrument apparently invented by himself, which he calls the Solar Microscope. At many of these Benjamin Franklin had assisted. “It is the same to-day,” writes Marat, “as it seems to me, with the theory of fire as it was with the theory of colour before Newton. It is

regarded as matter, whilst it is only a modification of a particular fluid that I designate with the name of *igneous fluid*." The pamphlet contains the account of sixty-six experiments in proof of the theory advanced, and is illustrated with seven engraved plates. Marat's *igneous fluid*, like his "nervous fluids," has a singularly archaic sound to us at the beginning of the twentieth century, but we must not forget that at this time "phlogiston" was still struggling to maintain itself in face of the discoveries of Priestley and Lavoisier. To the *savants* of Marat's day *igneous fluid* might easily have seemed a perfectly rational and intelligible hypothesis. In fact, before the discovery of the composition of flame from oxygen, carbon, and hydrogen, whilst the ancient views still held sway that fire was one of the ultimate elements of the universe, Marat's theory was as plausible as any other that had been suggested. When we recollect that the last important book on Alchemy and the first important book on Chemistry were separated from one another by a year only, that the one appeared in 1749 and the other in 1750, we can realise to some extent the mental background of investigators of physical science in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. That the Academy of Sciences of Paris testified its appreciation of Marat's investigations, notwithstanding its rejection of his theory, is sufficient guarantee of their not having been below high-water mark at the time.

Somewhat after the appearance of the last-

mentioned work appeared *Découvertes de M. Marat sur la lumière*, confirmed by a series of new experiments. It was a book of 141 octavo pages, and was published early in 1780. This was followed in two years' time by a considerable volume in 461 pages, entitled *Recherches sur l'électricité par M. Marat*. The work begins with a sketch of the history of physical science up to the date of writing, the sketch exhibiting a vast amount of reading, if nothing else. Subsequent portions discuss the best instruments for electrical work, and contain the reports of many hundreds of experiments made by Marat himself. All these works were published at Marat's own expense. They were not without success, the treatise on Light passing through two editions, and affording occasion to Marat to give a course of lectures on Optics, which were attended, it may be remarked, by Marat's subsequent political and personal enemy, Barbaroux, the Girondist. The book in question was translated into German and honoured with the commendation of Goethe. In 1784, Marat published a work presumably based upon these lectures, entitled *Notions élémentaires de l'optique*. Finally, in 1788, appeared his translation of the *Optics* of Newton, with notes, although, on the ground of a disagreement he had had with the Newtonians on certain points—a disagreement that in some cases seems to have amounted to a personal quarrel—he did not offer this to the public directly under his own name.

This work, to which only Marat's initial was appended, and which was edited by one Bauzée, received the high approbation of the Academy. The secret of its authorship was so jealously guarded that Bauzée, in a dedication to the King, declared the author of the translation to be unknown to him.

The last scientific work of Marat was published in 1788. Its title was *Mémoires Académiques, ou nouvelles découvertes sur la lumière*. As regards this work, Marat says that he forwarded it by other hands to compete with works sent to the Academy, and that in writing it he had been careful to avoid alluding to his earlier productions in connection with his own name. "Such," he says, "is the domination of old opinions, that an innovator, without intrigue, without party, without trumpet-blowers, is often reduced to hide himself in order to escape persecution. I know that my adversaries are endeavouring more than ever to close the journals to me. If they succeed, I shall wonder at the force of personal considerations and at the docility of critics. For the rest, they need not flatter themselves that they are going to tire me out. One is not made to be the apostle of Truth, when one has not the courage to be its martyr." Marat states that he has other optical essays in his portfolio, which he proposes to publish at the end of the year; amongst others, essays on the rainbow and the colour of the sky at sunrise and sunset, on the ellipsis of the moon on the horizon,

also on the double image in the Icelandic crystal. But this was on the eve of the Revolution, and the treatises in question were never destined to see the light of publicity. In conjunction with a large number of private documents, they were probably stolen from Marat by the authorities during the raid upon his apartments on the 22nd of January 1790.

Respecting this raid Marat writes in the *Ami du Peuple* : " They have seized a package containing forty-three letters, forming my correspondence with Spain relative to the post the late King offered me in 1785 ; fifty-seven letters, seventeen from Franklin amongst them, forming my academic correspondence ; and more than three hundred letters forming my private correspondence."

As appertaining to the career of Marat as a physicist, we may recall an incident which occurred about 1785, and which hostile writers have more than once endeavoured to turn to his disparagement. The Academician Charles, Professor of Physics, who had made some bitter attacks on Marat's publications on Optics, announced a course of public lectures in one of the galleries of the Louvre. Marat went there, and found the place crowded. Charles soon after, entering amidst enthusiastic applause, began his discourse. The lecture consisted of a violent diatribe against the latest innovator. Marat, who was personally unknown to the audience, sat out for some time in silence the

travesty of his theories in physics given by the lecturer. The latter, finally, capped his observations by exclaiming, "And who is this Marat?" in a tone of acrid contempt—"this Marat, whom Voltaire has so justly stigmatised as a harlequin!" At this juncture our visitor springs up. "This Marat is here," says he, "and is ready to unmask false *savants* and to chastise insolence." For a moment the assembly was stupefied, but soon after voices were raised, demanding the expulsion of the disturber from the hall. "Let him alone," replied the Professor, with a disdainful shrug of the shoulders, "the gentleman is not dangerous." At this last insult, Marat sprang to his feet, shook himself free of his neighbours, and made a dash for the platform, where the Professor was proceeding to adjust his instruments to continue his lecture. Turning round with still greater contempt than that previously shown, Charles observed, "Is it a lesson in physics that you have come to receive from me?" "I propose, first of all, giving you a lesson in politeness," responded Marat, at the same time drawing his sword. The distinguished member of the Academy of Sciences and pensioner of the King, who also carried a sword, according to the custom of the period, slowly and with apparent indifference drew his. The swords were crossed, and Charles with the greatest sangfroid remained on the defensive, whilst Marat, mad with rage, cut and thrust furiously, the Professor deftly parrying the blows. Finally, in

the second bout, Marat, too excited to defend himself scientifically, received the sword of his adversary in the left hip. It penetrated right through the flesh, and Marat fell down in a swoon. A doctor present gave him attention, and declared that there was no danger. Marat was carried to his apartments, and after a few days recovered, but at the request of Charles, who was influential in Court circles, no notice was taken of the matter by the authorities. Such is the story as it has been told.

The account of this incident was first published by M. Gabriel Guillemot in the *Rappel*, some five-and-twenty years ago. The facts, as described, have been questioned on the ground of improbability, especially the duel before a public audience in the Louvre. This has led writers both friendly and hostile to Marat to reject its authenticity as it stands, although without questioning the fact of a quarrel between Marat and Charles, or even the possibility of a duel at some time and place.

The only direct documentary evidence on this affair is a letter from Marat written to Macquer, a distinguished chemist and a common acquaintance of both Marat and Charles, of which the following is preserved in Chevrement (vol. i. p. 75):—"Although you have given me cause to suspect your principles, Monsieur, I will not believe you sufficiently cowardly to break your word of honour so many times pledged to me. You will find in me a generous enemy, who would blush to surprise his adversary or to wish



to take advantage of his superiority. In order to convince yourself of this, have your witness ready ; I shall have mine. The bearer will tell you the rest. Sunday ; two o'clock. MARAT."

From the text of this letter, it is not quite clear whether it was intended for Charles, and merely sent through the hands of Macquer, or whether it was addressed directly to Macquer himself.

The best general idea we can give of Marat's position in the scientific world at this time is that afforded by a letter of his to his friend Philippe-Rose Roume de Saint-Laurent, who had used his influence in Spain to obtain for Marat the directorship of the Academy of Sciences at Madrid. Roume founded a brilliant Spanish colony "from which the very name of the Inquisition was banished." He evidently was in close relations in some official capacity with the Spanish Court, and was subsequently French National Commissioner in the colony of San Domingo. Letters are extant from him dating from shortly before Marat's death, two to Marat himself, and another to Danton and Robespierre, pleading his own cause against the accusations that had been made against him. His friendship at the time with which we are dealing was duly appreciated by Marat, as the letter from which we here quote shows. It bears date : "Paris, the 20th of November 1783." Marat begins : "It is true, then, my friend, that calumny has flown from Paris to the Escorial to blacken me in the mind of a great king and an illustrious Mæcenas.

Twenty letters, you say, have painted me in the blackest colours. But who are my detractors? Is it necessary to ask? Envious cowards, the numerous crowd of whom does not cease to devote itself to my destruction—modern philosophers, hidden under anonymity or false names in order to defame me. Shall I, then, always be the butt of their ill-humour, for having renounced academic honours for the love of truth, for having advanced useful knowledge, for having called back to life a great number of my brethren declared incurable, for having defended the cause of virtue? At this idea my heart revolts. But no, I will not murmur against the holy decrees of Providence, and no matter what may be the excesses to which my adversaries lend themselves, never shall they force me to repent of having been a good man.” It is, he declares, necessary to go back to the origin of their hatred. “Since my youth,” he continues, “I have cultivated letters, and I may say with some success. Scarcely had I attained the age of eighteen, when our pretended philosophers made various attempts to drag me into their party. . . . The desire to educate myself in science and to avoid the dangers of dissipation induced me to migrate to England. I became an author, and my first work was destined to combat materialism in developing the influence as much of the soul on the body as of the body on the soul.” He relates that he was advised to preserve an incognito in his writings. “Whilst maintaining my

incognito, but distrusting the exactitude of the translation that had been made,<sup>1</sup> I submitted it to the examination of certain Englishmen distinguished by their virtues as much as by their talents, amongst others to the late Lord Lyttelton, the author of several esteemed works, and to M. Collignon, Professor of Physiology in the University of Cambridge. . . . Finally my work appeared, and made a sensation. The notice given in the *Westminster Magazine* for June or July 1773, written by a society of men of letters, may be consulted. I will say nothing here of the praises that they lavished upon it, but I cannot pass in silence the censure dealt out to me for the disrespectful manner in which I had treated our pretended philosophers in a note to be found at the beginning of the work. Lord Lyttelton has often spoken of me to the Russian minister; and some months after the publication of my book, an offer was made to me to go to St. Petersburg."

He proceeds to describe the fortunes of the French versions of his book. Owing, as he thinks, to the intrigues of certain French *philosophes*, it had been prohibited in France although the embargo was subsequently removed and the edition speedily sold out. Farther on, he relates how, having passed ten years in London and Edinburgh in scientific

<sup>1</sup> From this it would seem that the treatise in question was translated by an Englishman from Marat's French, although this is not stated on the title-page of the book.

research, he returned to Paris. "Many sick persons," he says, "of distinguished rank, who were despaired of by their physicians, and to whom I had restored health, joined with my friends in endeavouring to induce me to fix my abode in the capital. I acceded to their persuasions; they promised me fortune, I have only found outrage, annoyance, and trouble."

He continues: "The fame of the surprising cures I have made drew to me a prodigious crowd of sick people; my door was continually assailed by the carriages of persons who came to consult me from every quarter. As I exercised my art as a physician, the knowledge of Nature gave me great advantages, no less than my swiftness of eye and accuracy of touch, and my multiplied successes caused me to be called 'the physician of the incurable.' . . . My successes gave umbrage to the doctors of the Faculty, who calculated with sorrow the big amount of my profits. They consoled themselves by forming a project to dry up their source. I could prove, if needs be, that they held frequent meetings to consider the most efficacious means of slandering me. Henceforth calumny spread in every direction, and anonymous letters reached my patients from all sides in order to alarm them with regard to me. A large number of persons, whose friendship for me is founded on esteem, took up my defence, it is true; but their voices were drowned by the clamour of my opponents. All these facts are matters of public notoriety.

"Disgust, inseparable from the practice of medicine, made me sigh more than once for the retirement of the library ; I then gave myself up entirely to my favourite studies. Could I have foreseen that I was going to make myself a new cause for envy ?

"Scarcely had I passed thirteen months in my study when my *Nouvelles découvertes sur le feu* were complete. To shelter them from plagiarism, I applied to the Committee of the Academy of Sciences ; but as it counted amongst its members several *philosophes* whom I had acquired so strong a right to distrust, I considered that I ought only to reveal myself to the Comte de Maillebois, and I appeared merely as the representative of the author.

"The curiosity excited amongst the Academicians by the discovery of the igneous fluid, that formidable agent of Nature, was enormous. You will only get a feeble idea of it from the letter which one of the committee-men wrote me on this subject a few days before making his report. . . . Compare, I beg you, the tone of this letter with that of the Academy's report, and you will recognise that frankness is not always the language of scientific bodies. However, in spite of its tortuous style, in spite of its insidious reticence, in spite of the faint praise that this report contains, it says enough to far-seeing men to satisfy them as to the importance of my discovery."

Marat goes on to explain in this lengthy

letter the steps he took to avoid being robbed of the merit of his discoveries. "At last," he says, "the summary of my experiments into the nature of Fire became known. The sensation that it caused in Europe was prodigious ; every public journal made mention of it. For six months I had peer and townsman (*la cour et la ville*) at my house. Those who could not see my experiments in my study as often as they wished, asked for special courses of lectures, which M. Filassier, a member of several Academies, gave. Amongst the subscribers were princes of the blood and the most eminent personages in the country.

"Whilst the curious ran in crowds to my disciple's house to see my fire experiments, I submitted my *Découvertes sur la lumière* to the examination of the Academy. Being unable to preserve my incognito any longer, I counted less upon the impartiality of my judges, almost all of them out-and-out partisans of Newton.

"At the first sitting, they saw several experiments with which they appeared much struck. In beginning the second, they asked to see the principal experiments only. Their request astonished me, and made me think they intended stifling at their birth the discoveries they dreaded. But, without showing them my surprise, I contented myself with replying that it was important to follow the natural order of things, and that one should only pass on to a new experiment when the preceding one had

been established. Events proved indeed that the precaution was not useless, since the Academician entrusted with the report, being unable to send it back, tried to take from me the manuscript examined by my commissary, although he had copied it, as appears from his letter.

“The Academy, having recognised that it would not be possible to annihilate my discoveries, sought to have them brought out under its auspices. So some days after this little transaction, I received on the same morning, one after the other, visits from three of its members. They asked me, each in private, *if I had the design of entering the Academy*. I had just been a witness of the disagreements that one of them had experienced with his colleagues; he had been on the point of being expelled for having refused to submit his opinions to them. If this honest man has run such a risk, said I to myself, I shall run more, I who hold in horror the underhand intrigues of a certain scientific body [viz. the Academy]. Accordingly, I contented myself with replying to them *that I had not yet thought over the matter*. My reply, misunderstood, was taken for a *disdainful* refusal, and from that time the persecution began.

“Seven months had been spent in establishing my experiments on the subject of Light; three months were spent in drawing up the report upon it, and five months on my part in asking for it. The result was a denial of justice; it was exactly what I had expected,

for it must be confessed that the task was as delicate as it was thorny for the gentlemen of the Academy. To admit the truth of my experiments was to recognise that they had worked for forty years on wrong principles, a confession that specially affected the section of geometricians and astronomers. Accordingly, it formed a veritable cabal against me. After having denied facts that they had not seen, they cried in unison : ‘ *If this man is right, what do you wish to have done with the annals of the Academy ?* ’ And the Academy, swayed by this beautiful argument, shut its eyes to the evidence.”

After some further remarks on the subject of his Academic persecution, Marat writes : “ I followed my *Découvertes sur la lumière* with my *Découvertes sur l’électricité*, which had the approval of several famous physicians.” He then quotes the names of numerous journals that had dealt favourably with his treatises. He mentions, amongst them, the *Monthly Review*, adding, “ You will see from this that, although it affects the fame of their immortal Newton, the English have not been afraid to call in question that which he believed he had settled.”

“ In the midst of my success,” he continues, “ what has most flattered me is the zeal of some foreign professors who have made the journey from Stockholm and from Leipsic to Paris, in order to make themselves acquainted with my experiments. . . . After having worked at the physical side of electricity, I arranged to work



at its medical side, a scientific subject that interests society so much." He goes on to relate that the Academy of Rouen had opened a *concours*, the subject of the competitive essays being to determine up to what point and under what conditions one can rely upon electricity in the treatment of disease. Marat sent in an anonymous essay, and shortly afterwards learnt that it had been "crowned." "You see again from this little success," he adds, "that the Academies themselves know how to do me justice when I retain my incognito."

It is enough to sum up briefly the latter part of this letter. Marat has endeavoured to show that the charges of ignorance, incapacity, and charlatanism made against him by his opponents had been dictated by envy and had been unmasked by the testimony of a multitude of distinguished men. He now proceeds to deal with the sneer that he is a man who promises great things and who is incapable of fulfilling his undertakings. To destroy the charge of megalomania, he points to his refusal to accept many tempting offers from crowned heads and others. "Eleven years ago," he says, "after Lord Lyttelton's flattering testimonials, I received from the Russian minister splendid proposals for a visit to Russia, and without entering into any explanation I refused them, because the climate did not suit me. Ten months ago, after the flattering testimonials of the Comte Valis, who knew me

intimately, a sovereign in the North offered me 24,000 livres a year salary and 12,000 livres retiring pension, to go to his country and work there at a complete course of physics. Free to accept, I have not done so ; the reasons are known to you. Nine months ago you communicated to me the project you had formed of bringing me to Spain ; you know if my reply was that of an ambitious man." Marat turns aside here once more to denounce the manœuvres of the *philosophes* who had tried to injure his reputation at Madrid. "The morality of these gentlemen, adapted for corrupt courts, has a thousand attractions for young people ; accordingly, their proselytes are very numerous. . . . Already they have formed the horrible project of destroying all the religious orders, of annihilating religion itself. . . . If one day they should come to conceive the ambitious scheme of carrying their opinions into political affairs, who shall hinder them, by means of their creatures, acquainted with all that passes in official quarters, from shaking governments and overturning states ? I see only one means, my friend, of preventing these misfortunes, and this is to employ all great writers to cover these apostles of modern philosophy with ridicule."

This last quotation is interesting as indicating a distinctly conservative strain, not merely religious, but also political, in the Marat of this period. One more quotation will suffice to

show the high value which Marat attached to his labours. "Until my time, all that had appeared on the subject of electricity could be reduced to a mass of isolated experiments, complicated in character, mixed up one with the other, and scattered over five hundred volumes. The thing was to drag science out of this frightful chaos. I shut myself up in my dark chamber, I turn to my method of observation, I render visible the electric fluid, I compare it with the fluid of flame and the fluid of light, with which it has been confounded. I observe its properties, its manner of action, the phenomena that result from its contact with air, light, and fire. Then, no more hypotheses, no more conjectures, no more probabilities—all becomes experimental ; science is created ! And it is an ignoramus indeed, is it, who has brought to the light of day the only methodical principle, the only known theory, of electricity ?" Marat concludes with the words "There, at last, my task is finished. To put the coping to yours, you have only to present my justification to that wise minister [Comte de Florida Blanca], asking him on my account to bring it under the King's notice, rendering me happy, ay only too happy, to be judged at the tribunal of his wisdom and justice." This letter will afford the reader a sufficient insight into Marat's scientific activity. Other small pamphlets appeared from his pen, one of them discussing the causes of a fatal accident that happened to aeronauts near

Boulogne-sur-Mer in 1785, when from some unexplained causes an explosion took place and the balloon caught fire.

More practically important from a personal, as well as from a public, point of view than Marat's researches into igneous fluids, visible electricity, and the like, was his career as a medical man. The malignant reports circulated after his death, and even to some extent before, by his political enemies, absurd on the very face of them, and given without so much as an attempt at substantiation, are beneath our notice. It was, of course, attempted to dispute his qualifications and to brand him as a quack, and any falsehood, however grotesque or impossible, has been eagerly accepted by a public opinion debased by class-interest to hatred of all those opposed to class-domination. For Danton, the mere politician and patriot, there might be a place for forgiveness. For Marat, the social revolutionist, there could be none.

We have already seen that Marat received a good education in his father's house, and spent some years, on leaving home, in pursuing his medical studies. Whether he actually took his degree in medicine in the ordinary course on the Continent is uncertain. We know, however, of the success that attended his practice apparently from the first—a success that acquired for him the sobriquet of “the physician of the incurable.” As evidence of his academic and medical status, two documents from the University of St.

Andrews are decisive. The first is the diploma of doctor in medicine accorded to him by the Scottish University. The translation of the Latin reads as follows :—

DIPLOMA OF DOCTOR IN MEDICINE CONFERRED  
ON CERTIFICATES UPON JEAN-PAUL MARAT

We, Rector of the University of St. Andrews of Scotland, Director, College Prefects, Dean and Professor of all degrees of the Faculty of Arts, to the readers, salutation.

Since it is just and reasonable that those who, by long study, have attained a knowledge of the useful arts, should receive a prize worthy of their studies and distinguish themselves from the ignorant vulgar by honours and special privileges, which bring to them some advantage and the respect of each and all ; since amongst the important rights accorded from a distant period to the University of St. Andrews, it has that of attaching to itself, whenever necessary, capable men in each section of the Faculties, and of making them participate in the honours which it enjoys ; since Jean-Paul Marat, a very distinguished master in arts, has given all his attention to medicine for several years, and has acquired a great skill in all branches of this science ; with the approbation of numerous doctors in medicine, there has been conferred upon him the supreme grade of doctor in medicine ; on these grounds we have accorded to the master who has presented himself, and who has been named above, the free and entire liberty to profess, to exercise, in whatsoever fashion, the art of medicine, and to do all that is connected with this art ; so that the privileges, advantages, emoluments, honoraria, which are accorded

in all countries to doctors in medicine, may be conferred upon him ; and we wish that he be honoured with the title in medicine, and that he may be considered henceforth by all as a doctor received and very worthy to be one. In faith of which we have delivered to him this diploma as a privilege bearing our signature and stamped with the seal of our powerful University of St. Andrews.

Given at Andreapolis on the 30th of the month of June 1775.

The second document is an extract from the minutes of the University, and reads as follows : —

ST. ANDREWS, *the 30th of June 1775.*

Before the Rector, Professor Shaw, Dr. Forrest, Mr. Cook, Dr. Flint, Mr. Cleghorn,

The University, unanimously, has conferred the degree of doctor in medicine upon Jean-Paul Marat, practising in physics, on the certificates which are in the hands of Dr. Hugh James and Dr. William Buchan, doctors at Edinburgh.

Here we have conclusive proof of Marat's qualifications as a medical man. That he studied at Toulouse and elsewhere in France we have also good evidence, though, as said before, whether he took his degree there has not been ascertained. Brissot, who became Marat's bitterest enemy, but who was at the time when the latter was practising medicine in Paris on terms of intimacy with him, relates that Marat had told him he was then charging thirty-six francs a visit and that he was unable to see all the patients who

came to consult him. Neither Brissot nor any one else thought of doubting the facts at the time, but when the Girondin leader wrote his memoirs it was, of course, necessary for him to malign his former friend. Hence he is bound to throw doubts upon Marat's success no less than upon the value of his discoveries as physicist, which he himself admits that he had formerly rated highly. In connection with Marat's medical standing, Brissot naïvely says, "It was only after recalling the divers circumstances of my relations with this odious man, and comparing them with the rôle that he had played in the Revolution, that I convinced myself that it was charlatanism that had directed and covered his actions all his life." In other words, he had to call his political prejudices against Marat into play in order to persuade himself that Marat was no good as a doctor or in any other capacity! The only other argument he adduced against Marat's statement of the extent and value of his practice is that—although he admits he lived in very comfortable style—he did not notice those signs of luxury in his apartments which he would have expected where a man was making the income alleged. This very lame argument can hardly have been used in good faith, for Brissot, knowing Marat as well as he did, must have been aware that he was the last man to care for superfluous display. Moreover, he himself goes on to relate that Marat declared to him his intention of abandoning his profession, lucrative as it was,

for the purpose of devoting himself to his favourite studies in physics. This, of itself, would afford more than sufficient grounds for Marat's preferring to save, instead of living up to the top of his income. The natural conclusion that Brissot was acquainted with his friend's ascetic habits is confirmed by his own words, when in a moment of candour he writes concerning Marat : " One must do him justice ; insensible to the pleasures of the table and to the enjoyments of life, he concentrated all his means upon his experiments in physics." As a matter of fact, it is absurd to suppose that Marat made a statement that could have been immediately refuted, if it had been either untrue or seriously exaggerated.

Amongst Marat's earliest publications were two medical pamphlets, one entitled *An Essay on a Singular Disease of the Eyes*, and some time later *An Essay on Gleans*. From the preface of the last-named, we quote the following, as showing Marat's repudiation of those tricks of the quack which at that time even qualified medical men did not in all cases disdain to employ. Speaking of his method of treatment of the malady in question, he says : " A man of mercenary principles would no doubt keep it a secret ; but a liberal mind is above such interested practices. To promote the good of society is the duty of all its members ; besides, what an exquisite pleasure it is for a benevolent heart to lessen as much as possible the number of those unfortunate



victims who, without hope of relief, labour under the many evils to which life is subject ! Thus, not satisfied with relieving the patients who resort to me, I wish I could relieve many more by your hands." Both pamphlets were written in English, whilst Marat was practising in Church Street, Soho, London, and the last mentioned is dedicated to the Royal College of Surgeons, to whom a superscription and the above preface are directed.

A third medical publication was of larger dimensions. We refer to the *Mémoires sur l'Electricité médicale*, issued as an octavo volume in Paris in 1784, having been previously "crowned" in manuscript by the Royal Academy of Sciences at Rouen in August of the previous year. The conclusions of this work were attacked by the learned Abbé Bertholon, who, under the pseudonym of the "Abbé Sans," wrote a criticism of it in No. 16 of the *Année Littéraire*. Marat published a reply under the pseudonym of "Monsieur l'amateur Avec," with the title *Observations of M. l'amateur Avec to M. l'Abbé Sans on the indispensable necessity of having a solid and luminous theory before opening a dispensary for medical electricity*. The brochure was ironically inscribed "Epidorus and Paris," and was issued in 1785.

We now pass on to consider Marat's pre-revolutionary activity as political writer and pamphleteer.

## CHAPTER IV

### MARAT AS PRE-REVOLUTIONARY POLITICAL WRITER

THE first political work written by Marat was *The Chains of Slavery*, which was published in English in London in 1774. Its full title was "The Chains of Slavery: a work wherein the clandestine and villainous attempts of princes to ruin liberty are pointed out, and the dreadful scenes of despotism disclosed, to which is prefixed an address to the electors of Great Britain, in order to draw their timely attention to the choice of proper representatives in the next Parliament." It bore the motto *Vitam impendere vero*. We have already seen the conditions under which this book was produced.

We give here *in extenso* the address to the electors, regarding it as of special interest to English readers. It is as follows:—

Gentlemen, in time of security, when prosperity smiles upon the land, the eloquence of an angel would not be attended to; but when princes, to become sovereign masters, trample under foot without shame

or remorse the most sacred rights of the people, attention is excited by the most minute object, and even the voice of a man so unsupported as myself may have effect upon the minds of the public. If by collecting into one point of view under your eyes the villainous measures planned by princes to attain absolute empire and the dismal scenes ever attendant on despotism, I could inspire you with horror against tyranny, and revive in your breasts the holy flame of liberty which burnt in those of your fathers, I should esteem myself the most happy of men. Gentlemen, the present Parliament by law must soon expire; and no dissolution was ever more earnestly wished for by an injured people. Your most sacred rights have been flagrantly violated by your representatives, your remonstrances to the throne artfully rejected, yourselves treated like a handful of disaffected persons, and your complaints silenced by pursuing the same conduct which raised them. Such is your condition, and if such it continues the little liberty which is yet left you must soon be extinguished; but the time for redress is now approaching, and it is in your power to obtain that justice you have so many times craved in vain. As long as virtue reigns in the great council of the nation, the prerogative of the crown and the rights of the subjects are so tempered that they mutually support and restrain each other; but when honour and virtue are wanting in the Senate, the balance is destroyed, the Parliament, the strength and glory of Britain, becomes a profligate faction, which partaking of the minister's bounty and seeking to share with him the spoils of its country, joins those at the helm in their criminal designs, and supports their destructive measures—a band of disguised traitors, who under the name of guardians traffic away the national interests and the rights of a free-born people; the prince thus becomes absolute and the people slaves—a truth of

which we have unfortunately had but too often the sad experience. On you alone, gentlemen, depends the care of securing the freedom of Parliament ; and it is still in your power to revise that august Assembly which in the last century humbled the pride of a tyrant and broke your fetters ; but to effect this, how careful must you be in your choice of those into whose hands you shall trust your authority. Reject boldly all who attempt to buy your votes ; they are but mercenary suitors, who covet only to enlarge their fortunes at the expense of their honour and the interest of their country. Reject all who have any place at Court, any employment in the disposal of the great officers of the crown, any commission which the King can improve. By men thus dependent, and of whom the Senate is chiefly composed at present, how can you hope to be represented with fidelity ? Reject all who earnestly mendicate your voice ; there is no good to be expected from that quarter. If they had nothing at heart but the honour of serving the public, do you imagine that they would submit to act such a disgraceful part ? Those humiliating intrigues are the traditions of vice, not of virtue. Merit indeed is fond of honourable distinctions ; yet satisfied with proving worthy of them, it never debases itself to beg them, but waits till they are offered. Reject men of pompous titles ; among them there is little knowledge and less virtue ; nay, what have they of nobility but the name, the luxuries and the vices of it ?

Reject the insolent and opulent ; in this class are not to be found the few virtues which are left to stock the nation. Reject young men ; no confidence is to be placed in them. Wholly given up to pleasure in this age of degeneracy, only dissipation, amusements, and debauchery are their occupation ; and to support the expensive gaieties of the capital, they are ever

consider what you owe to posterity. How careful were your ancestors, although with hazard of their lives, to transmit those rights as intact to their children as they had received them from their fathers. What they did with labour, you may do with ease; what they did with danger, you may do with safety. Will the holy flame of liberty which burnt in their breasts never burn in yours? Will you disgrace the names of your forefathers? Will you not shudder with horror at the idea of injuring your posterity? Is the age of liberty passed away? Shall your children, bathing their chains with tears, one day say, "These are the fruits of the venality of our fathers"?

Gentlemen, with virtue and courage a people may ever maintain its liberty; but when once this inestimable treasure is lost, it is almost impossible to recover it; and it is very near being so, when electors set a price on their votes.

In a short introduction, Marat gives the object of the work. "I am about," says he, "to retrace the slow and continuous efforts which, bending little by little the head of the people under the yoke, causes them at last to be lost, together with the strength and desire to shake it off." Marat starts with the thesis that the love of domination is natural to the human heart, and is the source of the abuse of power by the depositaries of authority. But it remains to be explained how the peoples consent to be dominated over by a few or even by one man. "In their infancy," he observes, "the people display all their vigour, they are then most independent, but they gradually lose this independence, becoming

more and more subject to the will of their rulers or ruler as they advance in age." The book then proceeds to show the processes by which this is effected. Examples are drawn from history, and they show the enormous extent of Marat's historical reading. "At first, and so long as the despotism is established and maintained by sheer force of arms, the people make many attempts to rid themselves of it. The State then resembles a robust body that often shakes its chains and sometimes breaks them. Hence, princes have found out a more subtle, but at the same time a more effective, way of placing and holding their subjects in slavery. They send them to sleep; they corrupt them; they cause them to lose the love for, and remembrance of, liberty, and even the bare idea of it. The State then resembles a sick body consumed by a slow poison, without the strength to free itself from its virulence." Illustrations of this thesis are taken from the recent history of nations. "At first, the monarch appears as the father of his subjects, the dispenser of justice. His government is at the outset so mild that it seems to safeguard rather than to threaten liberty. Thus, lulled into a false security, the people begin to be careless, and are then, slowly but surely, brought under the yoke. Fêtes, pageants, national monuments, new roads, markets, and churches all tend to distract the attention of peoples from that enslavement of them that the monarch has in view. Writers, actors, artists, musicians, and

many others are bought over by the monarch to effect his purpose."

Taking up Rousseau's parable, Marat maintains that commerce, in spite of its apparent advantages, is, looked at as a whole, detrimental to manners and to liberty. The merchant, in procuring the products of different climes and countries, makes the people subject to new wants. He regards his compatriots and strangers with an indifferent eye. The country of the merchant is the country where he makes the most profit. His speculations lead to the formation of privileged companies, which by their monopoly prejudice the poor handicraftsman and retailer. But the most widespread evil of commerce is the increase of luxury amongst all classes of the people which it brings in its train. The monarch being the source of all advantage in the State, the one thing needful is to please him. In order to lessen the danger of a unanimous revolt, the prince divides his subjects into opposing classes. He raises troops from the people themselves, and attaches them by personal interest to his service, whilst the people provide the means of paying them. He nominates judges to render arbitrary judgments as suit his purpose. Finally, he gains over priests to preach submission to himself in the name of God. All these measures taken, it remains only for him to put the coping-stone to the whole by placing the nominal power in his own hand, thereby protecting himself against all possible question of his

authority. Such a course is now easy, since he has the real power already at his disposal—soldiers, judges, gaolers, janissaries, executioners. This last step is the *riveting* of the “chains of slavery” upon the unhappy people.

All this sounds to modern ears strangely antiquated, even as the echo of a far-off time. Since 1774, since the French Revolution itself, we have indeed moved a long way from the short and simple method of reducing all the evils of society to the calculated wickedness of its princes and rulers. Yet the whole is eminently eighteenth century. For all periods of history we find the same two actors placed on the stage. We have here the villain and the hero of contemporary speculation—the villainous prince and the heroic, if down-trodden and stupefied, people. Once rouse the hero from the magic sleep into which the wicked giant has thrown him, and the hero will come to his own, and the machinations of the hateful ogre will be confounded and brought to nought. It is all so like a fairy tale. At all times and in all ages, where political communities have existed, there was the cruel deceiving tyrant, and the good, deceived, enslaved people. Of *evolution*, economic, political, and intellectual, not so much as a rudimentary idea is discernible. Of the growth of classes, religious conceptions, and political forms, by a necessary process of development from elementary germs, of the dependence of political upon economic forces, of the action and reaction of speculative



beliefs on both, in short, of society as a living organism, we have no trace. All is so delightfully simple—black and white, bad and good, ruler and subject, prince and people !

The next important contribution of Marat to political literature was his *Plan de Législation criminelle*. Although, primarily, as its name implies, a treatise on jurisprudence, it is a practical application of Marat's Rousseauite theories, political and social, to legislation. This book was first issued in 1780, and a second edition appeared ten years later. Its author was very proud of the work, which he regarded as the "least imperfect" of all that his pen had produced. It was then the age of literary competitions, academies and other bodies vying with each other in propounding themes. Rousseau, as is well known, started his career by competing in one of these ventures. In 1778, a Swiss society of Bern suggested as a subject for a *concours* of this kind the sketch of a penal code. Marat entered the lists with the work above mentioned, but whether it received recognition at the Society's hands we do not know. In any case, it was published two years afterwards at Neuchâtel, the home of Marat's youth. The book immediately created a sensation, not alone in Switzerland, but also in Germany.

It seems scarcely necessary to call attention to the condition of criminal law and practice in the pre-Revolutionary period of the eighteenth century. Suffice it to say that the law and its

administration, including punishment, remained on a distinctly mediæval basis, with but little if any modification. Forms and punishments were equally archaic. Torture was still admissible, and not seldom applied. Mutilation, burning alive, and quartering were still recognised, and continued to be occasionally resorted to. Voltaire characterised the system of laws current in France as "a *chef-d'œuvre* of atrocity and stupidity." The feeling of the urgent need for reform was universal amongst thinking and humane people. Criticism of the prevailing system was, of course, easy, and though attempts at constructive reform were not so easy, yet these were not wanting, and the great work of the noble-minded Milanese Beccaria had already appeared before Marat's treatise.

Marat divides his work into four parts. The first deals with the fundamental principles of legislation. Whilst admitting that all the troublers of social order ought to be punished, Marat asks in what consists social order. "Equal rights," he answers, "reciprocal advantages, mutual help, these are its foundations." The author then proceeds to ask whether these are the bases on which the existing social order of European States rests. No, for we there see "none but vile slaves and imperious masters." Even in the less arbitrary States the ruling classes, though perhaps not ostensibly above the law, can elude it without difficulty. Men are born in the one condition or the other, either

masters or slaves, and it is only the exception if here and there on either side one leaves the position in which he has been born ; and even where this is the case, it is almost invariably, on one side or the other, the result of intrigue, baseness, or treachery.

Marat subsequently goes on to discuss the definition of a crime. "What is a crime? The violation of the laws." But how far are laws sacred in the sense that it is the citizen's duty to obey them. In order to be just, laws must, in the first place, not be contrary to nature, the most primary of all laws. This, however, is not enough, if they do not tend to the general good, that is, if they do not apply equally to all members of the State. Where they do not, you have a condition of oppression, in which man tyrannises over man. "The sole legitimate foundation of society is the good of those who compose it." Men are only united in society for the sake of their common interests. "They have only made laws in order to fix their respective rights, and they have only established a government in order to ensure for themselves the enjoyment of these rights." The original social compact is confirmed by subsequent generations. Then, owing to the free course permitted to ambition, industry, and talents, a portion of the population enriches itself at the expense of the rest. The laws of inheritance accentuate this. A mass of indigent persons arise in the State. Now, those who are reduced to perish of

hunger, since they are bound to society only by its disadvantages, are not obliged to respect its laws. "If society abandons them, they re-enter the state of nature, and when they reclaim by force those rights which they could only alienate in order to ensure for themselves greater advantages, all authority that opposes them is tyrannical, and the judge who condemns them to death is no better than a cowardly assassin. If, in order to maintain itself, society compels them to respect the established order, above all, it ought to protect them against the temptations of want. It owes them an assured subsistence, suitable clothing, complete protection, succour in illness, and care in their old age. For they cannot renounce their natural rights, except in so far as society offers them a lot preferable to the state of nature. It is only after having fulfilled in this way all its obligations towards its members that society has the right to punish them for violating its laws."

Applying these principles to the laws against theft, Marat has the following observations:—"All theft presupposes the right of property. But whence is derived this right? The *usurper* founds it upon that of the strongest; as if violence could ever establish a sacred right. The *possessor* founds it upon that of the first occupant; as if a thing were ever justly acquired by us merely because we were the first to lay hands upon it. The *inheritor* founds it upon the right of testation; as if we could dispose in favour of another of that which does not even belong to

ourselves. The *cultivator* founds it on his labour ; without doubt the fruit of your labour belongs to you, but cultivation presupposes soil, and by what title do you appropriate to yourselves a corner of this earth which was given in common to all its inhabitants ? Do you not feel that it is only after an equal division between all that it would be possible to assign to you your aliquot part ? Again, after this division, would you have a claim on that which you cultivate beyond what is absolutely necessary to your existence ? ”

We then have a theory dealing with offences against property—like the rest based upon the prevailing Rousseauite ideas—which may be summed up as follows :—Those who have no property and are unable to obtain work, and in consequence are threatened with starvation, have the right to take such means as are necessary to save themselves. The law of self-preservation is for them the only rule of conduct left. Society, or rather the existing organisation of society, having failed to perform its part of the contract towards *them*, they are released from all obligations towards *it*. They then re-enter the state of nature, out of which they, or rather their ancestors, had passed in accordance with the imaginary agreement, called in the language of the time the “Social Contract,” by which men had originally bound themselves together, for their mutual interest, to live under laws and a government and to forgo their original “state-of-nature” right to fight each for his own hand. “The right

to possess flows from the right to live. Thus, all that is indispensable to our existence is ours, and nothing that is superfluous can legitimately belong to us, whilst others want necessaries. This is the legitimate foundation of all property, both in the state of Society and in the state of Nature."

In one place Marat forestalls the notion of "national workshops." "Do not support the poor in idleness," he says; "employ them, place them in a position to procure by their labour that which they lack; make them learn some trade and let them live as free men; this will necessitate the establishment of several public workshops to receive them. But what of the funds necessary to establish them? Let them be levied from people in easy circumstances, particularly from rich people. Let the management be given to some good man, and let an honest magistrate have the inspection. I know that the establishments I propose will encounter many obstacles, and I dare not hope to see the abuses they are intended to remedy at once ended. For, since princes desire to command slaves, they require as subjects both the rich corrupted by luxury and the poor debased by misery. But I have not forgotten this; it is for free men that I write."

Many will be disposed to see in the foregoing passages an anticipation of Modern Socialism. It must not be forgotten, however, that Marat's suggestion implies no fundamental change in the

basis of society. The rich were to be taxed for the purpose of subsidising "workhouses" (in the true sense of the word) for those who happened temporarily or permanently to be out of other employment, in order that those should become supplied with the necessaries of life. He does not propose any alteration at all in the ordinary relations of employer and employed. We may presume that he was ready to remove the then existing guild-privileges and restrictions, and the trammels created by what he considered "bad laws" cunningly devised for the enslavement of subjects, in short, all that savoured of feudalism or bureaucratic oppression in those relations, but beyond that he would hardly have seen his way. The principles laid down by him do not exclude even the existence of the distinction between rich and poor, *provided that there are none so poor as to lack the necessaries of life*. This was the general theory of the Rousseauite revolutionary school. They deprecated excess of luxury, and strongly insisted upon the right of every citizen to live, at least, and hence to possess the means of living. But the objection to luxury was merely on vague moral grounds, as being opposed to true republican austerity, and it had no economic significance as such. Neither Marat nor any other politician or writer of his generation could have forecast the idea of the transformation of society through the transference of the instruments of production, distribution, and exchange from the hands of individuals or groups

of individuals, carrying them on for their own profit, to those of the organised power of the community, working them for the common benefit. All honour, however, to Marat for his idea, born as it was out of due time ! For if it does not imply fully-fledged Socialism in its present-day sense, it was at least strongly socialistic in its inception and tendency—more truly so, in fact, than many proposals which are now being lauded or denounced under the label of “Socialism.”

The second part deals with false political crimes. In this part Marat describes the wickedness of princes and their lawgivers in strangling liberty by means of legislation prohibitive of all criticism of those in authority. He declaims against their erecting into crimes the refusal to obey their unjust orders, the revindication of the rights of man, or the cry of the unhappy oppressed. “Having come to regard themselves as the only persons in the State, they qualify with the name of crime everything that offends them, and thus tyranny digs pitfalls everywhere under the feet of citizens.” Now, all these are false crimes, manufactured merely to prop up tyranny. But what about attempts against the life of the prince ? Is this a political crime ? No, answers Marat. “The murder of the prince is no more than a simple assassination. God forbid that I should attempt to weaken the horror that this crime should inspire ; but I would if I could re-establish the true proportions of things, and abolish those



horrible executions that have been invented by the love of domination."

As true political crimes, Marat reckons to abandon one's country, to render authority odious by abuse of its functions, to sell justice, to betray the State, to destroy the strength and wealth of the State, and finally to plot against the State by seeking to corrupt the army and the heads of State departments for the purpose of overturning law and seizing the supreme authority. "These are heinous crimes, inasmuch as they sacrifice the welfare of the multitude to the cupidity and ambition of some individuals." But, as they are more or less grave, he suggests that their punishment should not be the same in all cases.

The author then deals with crimes against property, advocating humane penalties for this class of offence. The second section ends with a dissertation on crimes against sexual morals. The State has, in the opinion of Marat, the right to control the chastity of its members on the sole ground of guarding the integrity of family life and of "favouring propagation, which has always constituted the strength of empires." That the "favouring propagation" with a view of strengthening the State, or perhaps the tribe, or confederation of tribes, was the origin of the absorption of this purely personal department of human affairs into the domain of the ordinary public and criminal law is in all probability strictly correct. But the modern man would hardly be willing to hand himself over body and

bones to be argumentatively slaughtered by Malthusians in admitting this as the ground of his approval of treating such offences in the present day as crimes. He prefers to take refuge in general statements as to the immorality or degradation of many of these offences, or to regard his personal disgust at them as a sufficient reason for penalising them. These remarks, of course, apply to that section of sexual offence which in its nature bars the so-called legitimate purpose of the sexual act, namely, propagation. On the general question of sexual morality, Marat was in favour of equality between the sexes in the apportionment of the retributive consequences of the act.

This part of the book shows, whatever we may think of it, that Marat's views on these questions were not those of a debauchee. It tends to dispose of the vulgar and commonplace slander against him that he was a man given to excess in this respect.

On the particular question of prostitution, Marat points out that the only way to suppress it is to remove the misery of those women who are driven by poverty to put a price on their "virtue."

Dealing with crimes against religion, Marat is logical in adopting the principle of toleration with one exception. His Rousseauite Deism, together with perhaps a slight recollection of his philosophical and scientific antagonists of the materialist school, leads him to advocate the sup-

pression of atheism when it becomes dogmatic. The passage is curious as illustrating the sentimental regard Marat had for the vague Deism then prevalent. "As long as the atheist only reasons, let him live in peace ; but when, instead of keeping himself to the sceptical attitude, he declaims, when he dogmatises, when he seeks to obtain proselytes, becoming from that moment sectarian, he makes a dangerous use of his liberty, and he ought to lose it. Let him then be shut up for a limited time in a humane gaol (*une prison commode*)."

In the third section Marat discusses the law of evidence, its technicalities, the nature of proof, and other questions interesting to jurists, but of no special significance to the general reader, and having no important bearing upon Marat's later career.

Section four and last treats "of the manner of acquiring both proofs and presumptions during the instruction of the procedure, of the manner of injuring neither justice nor liberty, and of reconciling mildness with the certainty of punishment, and humanity with the security of civil society." As safeguard for the poor man, Marat proposes to establish in each town an advocate of the poor, charged with the defence of all those too poor to pay for their own defence. He would abolish all courts the judges of which are nominated by the monarch. Further, whilst recognising certain advantages flowing from it, he objects to the institution of a permanent tribunal, advo-

cating the carrying-out of the jury system of trial by peers to its logical conclusion.

The foregoing sketch should convey to the reader a sufficiently good general idea of what we may conceive as Marat's most important pre-Revolutionary work. Strange to say, it was more popular in Switzerland and Germany than in France on its first publication. It was not until its reissue by its author in 1790, in a corrected and somewhat expanded form, that it came largely under the notice of French readers. We are now on the eve of great events, and the following chapters will deal with Marat not as the fashionable doctor, the man of science, or the writer of learned treatises in other departments, but with the pamphleteer, journalist, *placardier*, orator, and tribune of the people, in short, with the Marat of history—the Marat of the French Revolution.

## CHAPTER V

### MARAT AS REVOLUTIONARY PAMPHLETEER AND JOURNALIST

THE first writing of Marat's with a direct bearing on the Revolution is his *Offrande à la Patrie*, a pamphlet of sixty-two pages, in which he addresses his fellow-citizens on the approaching elections for the States-General. This body, which had not been called together since 1614, was now about to be summoned as a last resort, to stave off the impending bankruptcy of the country. It was now the end of 1788. Marat, it should be observed, was about this date attacked by a malady, at that time believed to be incurable (pruritus), from which he suffered during the whole of his revolutionary career, as has been too often forgotten not only by his enemies, but by otherwise impartial writers, in estimating the bitterness of some of his pronouncements.

The miseries of the people are the subject of the first discourse of the *Offrande*. These miseries the author traces to the wickedness of

finance-ministers : "Traitors to their master, traitors to their country, they have by their crimes compromised authority and brought the State to the verge of the abyss." Citizens are cautioned to beware of their subterfuges and to have the courage to shake off the evils so heavily weighing upon them. The second discourse appeals for union and foresight. The third warns the people against credulity in the choice of representatives. "Banish from the arena imprudent and fiery youth. . . . Enlightenment and virtue are the indispensable qualities for a representative of the people." And farther on we read : "The care of your fortunes, your liberty, your honour, the love of your families, your country, and your king, religion and the glory of the State, unite at this moment to solicit your prudence, to arm your virtue." In the fourth discourse Marat returns to the delinquencies of the finance-ministers, who have ruined France. In the last discourse, the fifth, suggestions are made for the basis of a constitution. The author declares it a necessity that the nation assembled in its estates should assure without delay its sovereignty and its independence of all other human authority. It was necessary that they should choose a place of sitting and decide to meet at least once every three years. The nation through its representatives was alone the legitimate sovereign, the supreme legislator, and it was to it that the ministers ought to be responsible. It was

indispensable that the States-General should elect a permanent committee to sit during the time they were not in session themselves.

This work, which was published in February 1789, was followed two months later, on the immediate eve of the elections, by a supplement of the same size as the original brochure. Its object was to call to the mind of the electors the three fundamental principles of public liberty—for individuals, *sacred rights*; for the nation, *inflexible laws*; for the Government, *insurmountable barriers*. France, he declares, requires a national council, clothed with sovereign authority, and a constitution wise, just, and free. Marat admits that this reform will probably cause some commotion in the body politic, but this must be risked, for no petty reforms will avail. He is aware, he says, “that there are some who think him too warm in the way he pleads the nation’s cause, but these are people insensible to public calamities, who, in face of the existing terrible situation, never preach anything but patience and resignation.” We may well disregard these cold-blooded persons. Marat is content “to have the good opinion of strong, brave, and generous men, determined to right the wrongs of the oppressed and bring order out of chaos.”

The second discourse of this supplement is relative to the letter of convocation to the States-General, the language of which he finds not that of a tender father to his children, but the imperious dictation of a prince who, because

his affairs are out of order, is willing to consider his subjects' grievances, on condition that they afford him, in their turn, the means of getting out of his difficulties. This, he thinks, is not a tone that augurs well for the intentions of the King and his advisers.

In his third discourse Marat deals with the rights and duties of the representatives. He warns the latter against placing overmuch confidence in designs from the throne. The purity of the King's intentions must be shown by acts. He also foresees the attempt to make the three Estates hold their sessions separately, according to the old feudal practice. This "Gothic mode" of conducting national business, contrary as it is to reason, will never do any good. The States-General must deliberate as a united assembly with one president, which must not dissolve until it has mapped out the kingdom's fundamental laws as they are to be in future.

The fourth and last discourse points out the advantages inevitably resulting from permanent national assemblies. The assembly of the nation's representatives, rather than the irresponsible council of the King, must be the future government.

The reader will readily see that Marat, in the above appeal, forestalls the action of the Estates on assembling. It cannot be doubted that Marat's publication had its influence in determining the question of the one chamber and the oath in the tennis-court, when the



deputies swore to remain assembled till they had given France a Constitution.

The next act in the revolutionary drama was the taking of the Bastille. What part did Marat play in this act? His enemies have sought to accuse him of cowardice, because, we suppose, he was not the first in the breach or at the drawbridge. Considering what Marat dared and braved during the following four years, such an accusation is absurd on the face of it, and only shows that any stick is good enough to beat Marat with. His own account of his conduct on the day in question is given in No. 36 of the *Ami du Peuple*, and may be here quoted :—"At nightfall on the 14th of July, I circumvented the project of surprising Paris by introducing into the city by a ruse several regiments of dragoons and of German cavalry, of which a large detachment had been already received with acclamation. It had just reconnoitred the *quartier* St. Honoré and was about to reconnoitre the *quartier* St. Germain, when I encountered it on the Pont Neuf, where it was halting to allow the officer in charge to harangue the multitude. The orator's tone appeared to me suspicious. He announced as a piece of good news the speedy arrival of all the dragoons, all the hussars, and the royal German cavalry, who were about to unite themselves with the citizens in order to fight by their side. Such an obvious trap was not calculated to succeed. Although the speaker obtained for

himself the applause of a large crowd in all the quarters where he had announced his information, I did not hesitate for an instant to regard him as a traitor. I sprang from the pavement and dashed through the crowd up to the horses' heads. I stopped his triumphal progress by summoning him to dismount his troop and to surrender their arms, to be received again later on at the country's hands. His silence left no doubt in my mind. I pressed the commandant of the city guard, who was conducting these horsemen, to assure himself of them. He called me a visionary ; I called him a fool, and seeing no other means of circumventing their project, I denounced them to the public as traitors who had come to strangle us in the night. The alarm I caused by my lusty cries had its effect on the commandant, and my threatening him with denunciation decided him. He made the horsemen turn back and took them to the municipality, where they were requested to lay down their arms. On their refusing, they were sent back to their camp with a strong escort."

Another reference of Marat's to his conduct at the time in question is given in his *Première Dénonciation contre M. Necker* :—"From the Tuesday evening," he there says, "the day of the taking of the Bastille, until the Friday evening, I did not leave the *Comités des Carmes*,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *Comité des Carmes*, it should be observed, was one of the committees of the Paris districts elected for the purpose of electing

of which I was a member. Obligated at last to take some repose, I did not reappear till the Sunday morning. The danger was no longer imminent, and I regarded things with a little more sang-froid. However important the occupations of a district commissioner might seem to me, I felt that they in no way suited a man of my character—a man who would not have accepted the place of first minister of finances even to save himself from dying of hunger. I proposed then to the Committee to have a printing-press and to permit me under its auspices to serve the country in chronicling the history of the Revolution, in preparing the plan of the municipal organisation, in following the work of the States-General. My proposal not proving to the taste of the majority, I regarded it as condemned, and persuaded of my perfect inaptitude for any other function, I resigned.”

Farther on, Marat continues:—“The plan that I proposed to the *Comité des Carmes* I executed in my own room at my own expense. My friends have done their utmost to prevent me from writing on current affairs. I have let them scream and have not feared to lose them. Finally, I have not hesitated to set the Govern-

the electors, who in their turn were to elect the deputy to act for them in the assembly of the States-General. These committees, which were only appointed for the special purpose in question, should in the natural course of things have dissolved, once their function was fulfilled. They decided, however, to remain in session, in order to watch their electors and deputies and the course of events generally.

ment against me, the princes, the clergy, the nobility, the *parlement*, the badly-disposed districts, the *état-majors* of the mercenary guard, the councillors of the courts of judicature, the advocates, the procurators, the financiers, the speculators, the depreciators, the blood-suckers of the State, and the innumerable army of public enemies."

From Marat's proposition, following on the events of the 14th of July, originated his career as the journalist of the Revolution. Marat, as a matter of fact, henceforward disappeared not only from the *Comité des Carmes*, but from street agitation, and to a large extent from public meetings, devoting himself to his pen in the people's cause. As we have already seen, some years before, when at the height of his popularity as a physician, he had expressed to Brissot his intention of abandoning medicine for scientific pursuits, so now he finally took his leave of solar microscopes and igneous fluids, to give his undivided energies—and what energies!—to that which until lately had been, after all, but a secondary occupation for him—revolutionary politics. Presumably out of the money he had acquired in the medical profession, he was enabled to start pamphlet-publishing and afterwards journalism. We may imagine that the expense of living in the French capital and of publishing unremunerative scientific works must at this time have considerably reduced his savings, and we have no reason to suppose that, even in his

of the provinces, and their absolute submission to the laws and to the taxes decreed by the representatives of the nation."

Marat, whilst acknowledging the claim of generosity and public spirit to popular admiration, continues:—"Let us indeed beware of outraging virtue; but let us not be dupes of any one. If beneficence dictated these sacrifices, it must be admitted that it has waited rather late to raise its voice. What! at the reflection of the flames of their burnt châteaux they have the magnanimity to renounce the privilege of holding in chains men who have recovered their liberty with arms in their hands! At the sight of the tortures of plunderers, of peculators, of the satellites of despotism, they have the generosity to renounce seigneurial tithes, and to exact nothing more from unfortunate men who have hardly enough to live upon! Hearing the names of the proscribed and seeing the fate that awaits them, they accord us the benefit of abolishing hunting-preserves, and thus permit us not to allow ourselves to be devoured by wild animals! Let us admit that they have done that from virtue which might so easily have been attributed to fear; but let us agree that the importance of these sacrifices, so much extolled in the first moment of enthusiasm, has been exaggerated!"

It is significant of Marat's tolerance—or, perhaps we might say, sentimental regard—for all pertaining to religion that, in a footnote to the above, after he had suggested that the nobles had

been actuated more by fear than virtue, he specially excepts from his suspicions the abandonment of certain rights, particularly of double benefices, "of which some virtuous *curés* had given the example." He also excepts the consent of the Third Estate deputies to the abolition of the privileges of the towns and of the provinces. There is little doubt that in singling out the liberal nobles of the Assembly as the object of his strictures, Marat was on this occasion unfair. We may take it for granted that the nobles, no less than the other classes, on the memorable night of the 4th of August, were really carried away by a sudden epidemic of enthusiasm, and that their sacrifices were not all the result of calculating motives. The fact was, however, that Marat saw that the aristocratic element had been perpetually imposing its will on the Assembly, and was about to do so again, by forcing into the new Constitution that was being elaborated the clause giving the King absolute right of veto. "It is evident," he writes, "that this odious faction has formed the project of opposing itself to the Constitution and of restoring to the King absolute power, luring the nation by the vain display of some illusory sacrifices, whilst scoring over the fundamental laws of the State which have to be confirmed." Marat undoubtedly went too far in calling the sweeping changes made on this occasion "for the most part illusory." This they certainly were not "for the most part," although certain items, specially criticised by

Marat, may deserve the epithet to some extent. It is also quite true that the fit of enthusiasm did not maintain itself, and that class-interest got the upper hand again within a day or two. And hence, from the politician's point of view, rather than the psychologist's, Marat's caustic criticism appeared completely justified.

Marat endeavoured in vain to find a publisher for this pamphlet, which he proposed to issue under the name of *Projet de leurrer le Peuple*. Lafayette's police had effectually intimidated printers and booksellers by the ordinances recently promulgated. Hence it was not until two or three weeks later that the above brochure saw the light in the pages of the *Ami du Peuple*. However, Marat, not to be outdone, published another pamphlet entitled *Le Moniteur Patriote*, which criticised Mounier's projected constitution. The pamphlet was published in a form resembling the first number of a newspaper of the time, but no second number was ever published by him, although it was carried up to the fortieth number by other hands. It was followed in a few days by a thick quarto pamphlet bearing the title, *Projet de Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen, suivi d'un Plan de Constitution juste, sage et libre*. In this work Marat lays down the basis of a constitution founded on his Rousseauite principles. [Man has in a "state of nature" neither social rights nor social duties. His one right and his one duty is self-preservation. For him all that conduces to this end is justifiable.

The *pact social*, however, whilst imposing upon him duties and obligations towards others and towards the State as a whole, only does so on the condition of the better guaranteeing of his original right of self-preservation. In a well-regulated society extreme differences in the fortunes of its members would not exist. A "rigorous equality," however, Marat thinks, could no more obtain in Society than in Nature. "Heaven," he says, "has given different individuals different degrees of sensibility, intelligence, imagination, industry, and power."

In blissful ignorance of later developments of the capitalistic system, Marat assumes that extreme wealth must almost necessarily be the result of "intrigue, charlatanry, favour, malversations, vexations, rapine," rather than the outcome of a nominally free contract between economically unequal "parties." But whatever differences there may be in fortunes, it is an axiom with Marat that no citizen should be left without the means of living, and hence that it is just to tax the rich, at least to this extent, for the benefit of the poor. In fact, the modern ideas of a progressive income-tax on an ascending scale would undoubtedly have met with a defender in Marat. The right to live, the right to liberty, the right to equality before the law, and, further, the right of insurrection when and where authority infringed these inalienable rights of man, form the basis. With Marat, as Bougeart has justly observed, there is no question



of the mere right of the majority. The Rights of Man, being anterior in origin to civil society, take precedence of all the institutions of civil society. No majority, however large, can be justified in enslaving a minority or in trampling on its rights. Here we have a distinct advance on Rousseau, with whom the right of the majority within civil society was supreme. Organised civil society forms, according to our author, a distinct body. The only true sovereign is the sum of the members of this society, or the people taken collectively, although, taken individually, each member is a subject. This sovereign is independent of all human power, and enjoys absolute liberty. Its will is law, and the authority it exercises is the legislative power. The whole nation is thus the true and only Legislator, just as it is the true and only State. "The sole barriers of the sovereign are the natural and civil rights, which it may never injure, for these rights are more sacred than even the fundamental laws of the State."

Applying these principles, Marat finds that every citizen can claim the suffrage as birthright. But the power that the sovereign people confides to its representatives is no more than a terminable commission. Hence, the people has the right to give imperative mandates, to revoke the powers of a deputy when he abuses them, and to punish him. The executive power ought to be strictly separated from the legislative. The executive ought to be deprived of all means of

influencing elections. The legislature ought to have the right of assembly unconvoked by the executive. The sanction of the prince to its decrees ought to be a simple formality. The magistrates and judges, as guardians of the civil rights of citizens, must be independent of the executive power. The latter, in fact, ought, strictly speaking, to be limited in its functions to external or foreign affairs. All the rest ought to be regulated by municipalities. The army should be nothing more than a numerous national militia, in which every citizen of good name should be enrolled. The great cities should be supplied with artillery, and the troops they contain should be solely at the disposal of the elected municipal magistrates. As will be seen here, Marat forestalls many of the political planks in the programme of the modern Socialist party. His whole treatise is pervaded with a sense of the fact that the great enemy the people have to dread is that government or executive power they may have themselves created, and that this is in most cases more to be feared than a foreign foe.

In religion, Marat would tolerate all creeds, "except that which would sap society"—a highly dangerous waver-clause! All the peoples of the earth have one religion, but their chiefs have woven a subtle bond to enchain them. As to the Catholic clergy, they have found the secret of erecting themselves into a sacred hierarchy, to attract respect to themselves by vain

pomp, to make for themselves a rich patrimony from the credulity of the people, to live in idleness, luxury, and pleasures, and to consume the substance of the poor. It is time to stop this scandal, to recall the higher clergy to the spirit of the creed they profess, and to make them return to the poor the goods they have so shamefully taken from them. With all his toleration, Marat postulates a national religion. In conclusion he sums up the principles of his constitution with the words:—"The social pact being a reciprocal engagement, into which all the members of the State enter, if the citizen wishes others to respect his rights, he ought to respect theirs in return."

We have now given a sketch of the salient points in the last important essay of Marat in constructive politics. Shortly after its publication, on the 8th of September 1789, the prospectus of Marat's first journalistic venture was distributed in the streets of Paris. It bore the title, *Le Publiciste parisien, journal politique, libre et impartial, par une société de patriotes, et rédigé par M. Marat, auteur de l'"Offrande à la Patrie," du "Moniteur," du "Plan de Constitution," etc. etc.* It also had appended to it Marat's favourite epitaph, which he had probably adopted from Rousseau: *Vitam impendere vero.* Marat's recent pamphlets had paved the way for the new journal, and considerable curiosity was excited by it. Later, in the *Journal de la République*, No. 46, he expounded the principles which ought to actuate a patriotic

journalist, and which he had doubtless formulated to himself on entering his new career. He was to scorn delights and live laborious days. He must be filled with an indomitable courage, to brave the hatred of those in power. He must despise the calumnies of which he will find himself the object. Finally, he must carry self-abnegation to the point of heroism, be prepared for every privation, contumely, and suffering, "be ready to spill his blood, drop by drop, to expose himself to perish miserably upon the scaffold, for the salvation of an ignorant and misguided people, who too often disdain him, who even outrage him sometimes, and by whom he is almost always misunderstood."

In the opening number of the *Publiciste* he declares: "However severe my pen may be, it will be only to be dreaded by vice, and even as regards scoundrels it will respect truth." The first few numbers dealt with the then all-absorbing questions of the Constitution, of one Assembly or two, of the King's Veto.

From the sixteenth number, the *Publiciste parisien* was rechristened by its owner the *Ami du Peuple*, a name that has ever since been a synonym for Marat himself. Thus named, the paper became the most important organ of the thorough-going side of the Revolution, until the opening of the Convention. Already at the thirteenth number, the publication had become a power, for in this issue we find Marat defending himself not against the avowed enemies of the Revolu-

tion, but against its milk-and-water friends, who wished to temper his zeal. "They admit," he says, "that I am right in attacking the corrupt faction that is dominant in the National Assembly, but they wish me to do so with moderation. It is like arraigning a soldier who is fighting against perfidious enemies." Shortly after this, Marat received his first summons to appear before the police tribunal. Two months had not elapsed from the founding of the paper before a second arrived. In consequence, the words that had appeared originally under the paper's title, "by a society of patriots," were struck out, Marat not wishing to risk implicating others in the further prosecutions which he knew awaited the journal.

The *Ami du Peuple* was never a newspaper in the modern sense. The modern "newspaper" with its leading articles was not as yet fully evolved out of the "pamphlet." The eight small octavo pages which usually composed it were made up almost exclusively of criticisms and remarks on current events written by Marat himself. It was, in fact, rather a daily pamphlet than a journal in the modern acceptation of the word. Notwithstanding its being written by one hand, which, one would have thought, might often prove unequal to the task of filling up the quota of "copy," on many occasions it had to be enlarged to twelve, and sometimes even sixteen, pages. It must not be forgotten that the hand was the hand of a Titan amongst the political writers of all time. At one period,

indeed, Marat attempted what was an obviously impossible *tour de force*. Finding even an enlarged *Ami du Peuple* an insufficient medium for his overflowing zeal, he started a second paper in June 1790, which he called the *Junius français*. The venture, however, as might have been expected, proved beyond the powers of even Marat, and the *Junius français* had to be stopped at the thirteenth number. It is significant of the difficulties of popular journalism under the régime of Lafayette, that during the ephemeral existence of the *Junius* Marat had to change his printer four times. From the first, the *Ami du Peuple* repeatedly refers to Marat's previous substantive works, especially to the *Plan de Législation criminelle* and to the *Plan de Constitution*. Marat's whole journalistic career was, in fact, little more than a commentary and application of the principles he had enunciated before entering upon it.

The only portion of the *Ami du Peuple* not written by Marat himself was devoted to letters he was constantly receiving from the victims of official tyranny in some form or shape. His zeal for the righting of private wrongs was only equalled by his enthusiasm in dealing with public abuses. These letters, of which there are between three and four thousand in all in the files of the journal, are in many cases of considerable interest. Bougeart remarks (vol. i. p. 199) that he was at first inclined to doubt the authenticity of some of these letters, on the

ground of a certain similarity amongst them, until he discovered Marat's explanation in No. 246 of the *Ami*, wherein he says : "It need surprise no one to find the same style in most of the letters that I publish : the limited space of my journal obliges me to edit them, so as to retain no more than their substance. For the rest, I accept the responsibility for certain epithets which I have retouched to adapt them to the subject."

As an illustration of the personal grievances of which the "People's Friend" was the recipient, we give an extract from the *Ami* of the 5th of January 1790 (No. 88). "Last Friday afternoon, about three o'clock, the Sister Catherine, nun at the Abbaye de Cantenont, presented herself before me, accompanied by a lady who appeared to be her mother. . . . The visit of a tall, young, and beautiful woman in such a costume could not but astonish me. I asked the purport of her coming. She held in her hand a number of my journal, and informed me that she had come from the Faubourg St. Antoine to beg me to assist her with my advice. Her open and unaffected manner, the tone of sorrow in her voice, and her ingenuousness, indicating a simple and honest soul, inspired me with interest on her behalf. I inquired the cause of her misfortunes. She told me that the previous morning she had escaped from the tower, where an attendant had concealed himself. The following is our conversation almost word for word, as far

as my memory serves me, for I did not take any notes :—

“ ‘What was it, Sister, that drove you to such a bold step?’ ‘The bad treatment I was continually made to suffer in the convent.’ ‘From whom, may I ask?’ ‘From the Mesdames de Chérie de Creveton, and even more from Madame de Betisi, my mistress.’ ‘What was this bad treatment?’ ‘I have been ceaselessly worried, many times beaten, and kept at penitence until my knees were quite lacerated.’ ‘You seem to be an amiable person; what reasons could these ladies have had for treating you in this manner?’ The poor girl did not hesitate, but gave me a long recital, out of which, however, I could make very little. She stated that her cruel treatment was due to the fact that Madame de Betisi, who had compelled her to enter the convent, was jealous of the confidence she showed to her coadjutrice, Madame de Varien. . . . Being unable to persuade myself that petty jealousies alone had been the occasion of such inhuman conduct, but readily guessing from the resolute manner of Anne Barbier (such was the nun’s name) that she had not been born to servitude, and judging from the fact of her having recourse to the ‘People’s Friend’ that she might possibly be a *patriote*, I ask how she came to know of me, and if she ever had access to the public journals. ‘We have in the convent the *Courier* of M. Mirabeau.’ . . . ‘Have you never spoken, Sister, in the presence of these



ladies, on the subject of public affairs ?' 'Oh, very often ; I have even argued with them. The day the Bastille was taken they exclaimed, when they saw the citizens running to arms, "There go the dogs, the scoundrels, who would massacre the faithful subjects of the King." "Why call them dogs ?" I said ; "they are perhaps as good as you are." "Silence, insolent one," was the reply ; "do you know what you are saying ?" Each time that there has been a disturbance in Paris we have recommenced our disputes.' After this simple exposure of facts, it is clear that the Sister Catherine, given over to the mercy of these kind aristocrats, has become, by reason of her patriotic sentiments, the object of their petty revenge, covered with the veil of hypocrisy."

Here are other extracts, showing the nature of the cases taken up by Marat. A commissary of police, having seduced the wife of a harpsicord-maker, abused his position to have the latter dragged off to the prison of Bicêtre. After vividly depicting the man's utter ruin, Marat concludes as follows :—"The Sieur Heintzler lodges in the Rue St. Jacques de Latran, etc. As his barbarous persecutor, after the horrors he has already perpetrated, may be justly suspected of anything, I demand that he be at once arrested by the police, to prevent his again being able to approach his victim, whom I place under the protection of the revolutionary committee of his section." Some sailors on the

coast of Newfoundland were ill-treated by their officers. Marat writes: "At the thought of such ferocity one's heart is wrung with sorrow and shocked with indignation. One shivers at the fate of these hapless victims of cupidity and cruelty; one burns with fury against their horrible oppressors."

The "People's Friend" exacted the usual "name," etc., from his correspondents as "a guarantee of good faith," but they were generally suppressed in publication. Initials, however, were often given. It was obvious that, having taken upon himself this delicate journalistic task, Marat was specially liable to have attempts made to dupe him by the enemies of the Revolution. A number of these attempts he was successful in unmasking, although doubtless he occasionally fell into a trap of the kind. Many of them, however, were particularly fatuous. Thus, on one occasion, he received a circumstantial letter detailing a projected Royalist conspiracy, the first act of which had been the burying of a large number of arms at Vincennes, and to effectually prevent any danger of the affair being revealed, the subsequent poisoning at a supper of all the workmen engaged in the operation. To this Marat replied: "However clever the correspondent may think himself, the advice he gives to the 'People's Friend' is too improbable not to appear suspicious and even false. I invite such worthy persons . . . not to

play with the 'People's Friend.' He will never be their dupe."

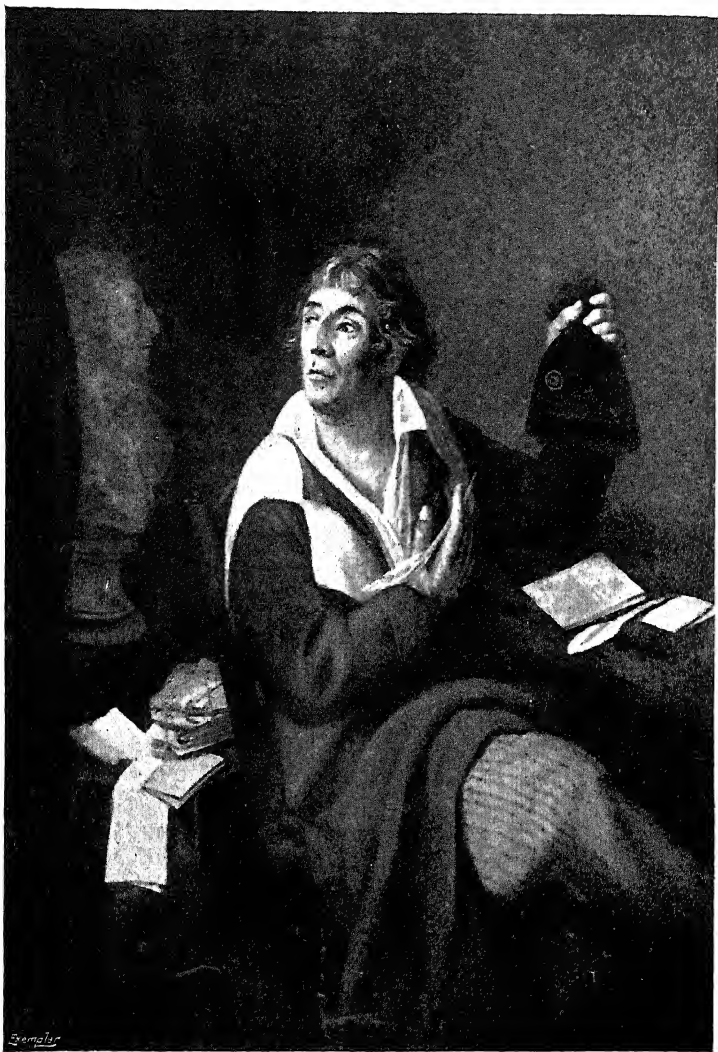
Amongst various means resorted to by the Royalist party to discredit the *Ami* and its editor, the most vexatious was the printing of bogus numbers of the paper. Some of these represented Marat as having changed his attitude, as defending some act of the ministry or as putting in a word in favour of some reactionary law. Even the one-time President of the Assembly, Clermont-Tonnerre, was not ashamed to perpetrate this kind of forgery. Later on, Bailly, Lafayette, and Roland, by means of their agents, had recourse to the same ignoble device (Bougeart, vol. i. p. 207). On one occasion, in September 1790, a pamphlet that excited some attention was published under the name of Marat, entitled *Lettre au Roi, ou l'Ami du Peuple au Père du Peuple*. Respecting this Marat writes, in No. 24 of the *Ami*: "Only an imbecile could suspect me of royalism. I am represented as carrying my complaints of my persecutors to the Prince. He is the last man, after his ministers, to whom I should think of speaking about them." He continues: "I am very far from expecting the nation's welfare from the monarch, I who regard him as its eternal enemy. Louis XVI. is, in my eyes, covered with the blood of the patriots of Nancy,<sup>1</sup> having applauded their executioner; as long

<sup>1</sup> The celebrated affair of Nancy is referred to in the next chapter.

as I live, I will not cease to lay that crime at his door."

Modern writers, with the object of injuring Marat, have sometimes taken these sham *Amis* as really emanating from him. On his return from London in 1790, Marat records that he found four sheets of this description in circulation. All this shows, if nothing else, the prodigious influence of Marat's paper on the course of public events. The "People's Friend" himself gives general hints as to how to tell the sham from the true *Amis*. "I notify my readers, friends of liberty," he says, "that they may distinguish my paper from the false *Amis du Peuple*, published under my name, by the fact that their authors are humbugs (*endormeurs*), who always preach peace, tolerance of factious priests, patience under the outrages of public functionaries, submission to laws however bad, blind obedience of soldiers to their officers; humbugs, who have to be silent on the prevarications and conspiracies of those who mislead the people, of the National Assembly, of the Municipality, of the Departments, of the *Etat-major* of the General (Lafayette), which I am ceaselessly denouncing whilst sounding the tocsin; humbugs, who do nothing but declaim against the Jacobins, the fraternal Societies, the Club of the Cordeliers, against whom I never say anything except it be to condemn their inaction and cowardice" (*Ami*, No. 448).

Other imitations there were, made simply for



PORTRAIT OF MARAT.

From an Oil Painting by Langlois, pupil of David. Presented by M. Chevremont to  
M. G. Pilotelle in 1898.



the purposes of gain, and consisting of *réchauffées* of old articles by Marat. As Bougeart justly remarks, the true touchstone of Marat's journalistic handiwork is its agreement or disagreement with his three constructive treatises—the *Plan de Législation*, the *Offrande à la Patrie*, and the *Plan de Constitution*, of which treatises his journalism was merely the application and commentary.

The unceasing exhortations to watchfulness, the endless denunciations of those in office, render a perusal of the *Ami du Peuple* somewhat tedious reading. Yet how necessary these exhortations were, and how well-founded the suspicions on which the denunciations were based, can only be appreciated by one who has closely followed the political and social history of that remarkable transition in France when the Old Régime, with all its bureaucratic traditions, handed down in spirit if not in letter to its immediate successors of the "constituent" period, was struggling with the new order of things inaugurated by the Revolution.

Marat's first summons was received on the 25th of September from one of the functionaries of the Paris Municipality, at the head of which were Lafayette and Bailly. The same evening he presented himself at the Hôtel de Ville, where he remained five hours without obtaining an audience. Next day he again repaired to the municipal headquarters, and waited with the same result. The day following, a note appeared in the *Ami* in these words:

“Your occupations are doubtless infinite, and mine are none the less so, and they much more concern the public welfare. I am the eye of the people; you are at most the little finger. Hence, be satisfied that, jealous of my time, I await at home further orders.” A day or two after (*Ami*, No. 19), we read as follows:—  
“To-day I receive a new order from the Municipality of Paris. I shall show the same deference to these gentlemen as before; I shall repair to the Hôtel de Ville. I do not know what they want with me, but I have a new subject of complaint against them. I invoke the rights and citizenship which they have violated, the interests of the people which they have sacrificed, in causing certain numbers of this journal to be seized some days ago by their patrols from the hands of the newsvendors. . . . Read then, blind soldiers, these writings the salutary influence of which you obstruct, and tremble with horror at serving as the instrument of tyranny in crushing the only defender left to you!”

Finally, on the 30th of September, Marat again presented himself at the Hôtel de Ville, and almost immediately afterwards appeared before the members of the Commune, or Municipality, of Paris. The mayor Bailly told him that his journal had been formally denounced, on the ground of its incendiary character, by the district of the Filles St. Thomas. “I should not have believed the thing possible,” says Marat in his journal, “had I not remembered that the district



is one peopled by the hangers-on of the money-market—bankers, financiers, *agioteurs*, that is to say, of men who live on the ruin of others, who drink the blood of peoples, and whose rapacity—true scourge of humanity—is one of the chief causes of the public misery.” Marat relates that he produced, in justification of his attitude, a letter *non-suspect* that he had received, praying him to denounce publicly one of the members of the Constituent Assembly. This letter, he says, contained “grave facts.” He also admitted having denounced another member, not on moral grounds, but on the ground of his incapacity for his functions. One of the municipal councillors then reproached him with certain articles, and warned him of the danger of destroying confidence in an Assembly which was destined to effect the salvation of France. The councillor at the same time expressed his belief in the patriotic intention of Marat’s exertions. To this Marat relates that he rejoined: [“Ah! can you doubt it, Monsieur? I will not tell you in reply that, since the loss of my little fortune, I live economically in a humble retreat; I will not tell you that for nine months I have kept to bread and water, to provide the cost of printing which has become enormous, and to serve my country with my pen; but what other motive than the purest love of humanity could induce a man of discretion, without intrigues, without partisanship, without ambition, one who wishes for no active part in public affairs, to expose

himself to the revengeful blows of the rascals whom he pursues, to sacrifice his livelihood, to devote himself to death ? ”

In the course of this interview, the “ People’s Friend ” denounced the corruption in various State departments to the city councillors present. He was heard, it would seem, not altogether without sympathy by some of them. At all events, no further steps were taken at the time. As regards this incident, Marat’s appreciation of the character of the *ci-devant* astronomer and now mayor of Paris, Bailly, is interesting. “ I recognise in Monsieur Bailly a distinguished *savant*, and I readily credit him with all the domestic virtues, but it is with regret that I see him at the head of the Municipality. He has passed his life in studying the exact sciences, but is little versed in public affairs, and he is attached to the Government by benefits that delicacy ought to bid him sacrifice the moment he has decided to devote himself to the service of his country.” How true this estimate was of the old eighteenth-century man of science subsequent events only too clearly prove. Bailly, from sheer timidity and want of backbone, allowed himself to be dragged at the tail of all the intrigues and rascalities of Lafayette and his following, and we may regret, but cannot wonder, that he ultimately found his way to the guillotine.

Among the numerous letters addressed by Marat to the Constituent Assembly in the summer and autumn of 1789, one only has

remained to us in its entirety, having been subsequently published by Marat. It was written during the heat of the great debates on the Constitution which occupied the Assembly sittings during August, was presented on the 23rd of that month, and bore the title *Tableau des Vices de la Constitution anglaise*, which was followed by the declaration of its being designed to cause the avoidance of a "series of rocks-ahead in the Government which our deputies are desirous of giving to France." After sketching the dangers of the English oligarchy, Marat offers as prophylactic, or as remedy, as the case might be, the following measures:—(i.) To merge close boroughs in the adjoining county representation; (ii.) to take away from the crown the right of making peers, and to confirm it on Parliament under certain restrictions; (iii.) to turn all placed men out of Parliament; (iv.) to render the accounts of the State subject to examination and audit, on the motion of any three members. These measures, which Marat had already proposed for the consideration of the English political clubs in 1774, as an appendix to his *Chains of Slavery*, he reproduces in the present document for the benefit of the Constitution-makers of France. He alleges that, when first published in England, his suggestions caused general fermentation, producing a sudden demand for parliamentary reform, which became in consequence the favourite toast of the popular clubs. The third of the proposed measures, he said, had

been passed, and so, he adds, would the others be in good time. Anglomania was at this time rampant in France, and the English Constitution was being lauded by many of the members of the Constituent Assembly as the perfection of wisdom. The advocates of two chambers were indeed continually calling to their aid the analogy of England. The dominant party in the Assembly, of which Mounier was President at the time, were, in fact, contemplating imposing upon France an exact copy of the English Constitution. Marat's exposure of the vices of this much-belauded model came therefore by no means too soon. The document undoubtedly had its effect. It was about this time that Marat replied to the projected Constitution drawn up by Mounier and his Committee-men by his own *Plan de Constitution* which we have just now noticed.

## CHAPTER VI

### MARAT AS A POLITICAL POWER

AMONG the revolutionary days of 1789, the 5th and 6th of October, the upshot of the events of which was the coming of the Constituent Assembly and the Royal family to Paris, are by no means the least important, and in the preparing of those events Marat's journalism played an important part.

This insurrectionary movement, called by Carlyle the "Insurrection of Women," had as its immediate cause the bread-famine then prevalent in Paris; the working-women, the *dames des halles*, rose under the leadership of the eccentric revolutionary amazon, Théroigne de Méricourt, demanding bread and the return of the King to Paris, which it was supposed would cause the price of bread to go down, or at least be a guarantee of good faith. The growing distrust of the possible action of the Court had culminated when news was received of the banquet that was held on the 1st of October in the Palace of Versailles by the Royal Bodyguard; on which occasion the

national tri-colour cockade was torn off and trampled under foot, and the white cockade of the *Ancien Régime* was donned in its place. Insults to the national emblems, and to those who wore them, continued throughout the following day. This, coming on the top of famine, naturally infuriated the populace of the capital. Now for three weeks past the question of the bread-famine, and of the necessity of having the Court under the people's eye in the heart of the metropolis, had been among the daily themes of the *Ami du Peuple*, hence Marat is justly credited with having been one of the most potent influences in bringing about the occurrences in question. The story of the events of the 5th and 6th of October are to be found in every history of the French Revolution. The aimless riot begun by the women was given aim and direction by Maillard, the Bastille hero ; the aim was the Court and the direction Versailles. The women, still led by Théroigne, carrying a drawn sword in her hand, and accompanied by a crowd of male Parisians, followed Maillard along the Versailles road. Lafayette, wishing to play the part of the saviour of the King in the nick of time, rather than prevent the attack on the Palace, delayed the pursuit till later in the afternoon. Drenched, and covered with mud, the crowd reached Versailles, demanding bread and the entry of the Royal family into Paris.

It is unnecessary to go into details of the events of that day and the following night.

Enough to say that the virtual siege of the Palace by the Parisian crowd continued throughout the afternoon and evening, and that in the morning, about five o'clock, the entry was effected through an unguarded door. The crowd streamed in, and the King and Queen narrowly escaped. Lafayette, who had been roused from his slumbers, succeeded in inducing the King to appear with his wife and children on the balcony, where he announced, through Lafayette, his intention of complying with the popular demands. The Royal family, in fact, left Versailles that afternoon, followed later on by Lafayette, on his white horse, the National Guard, and the remnant of the Paris populace that had remained behind. Marat was naturally delighted at the success of the movement, the objects of which, by his persistent agitation for days past in his journal, he had been largely instrumental in bringing about. The next day we read in the *Ami du Peuple*: "The King, Queen, and Dauphin arrived in the capital about seven o'clock last night. It is indeed a festival for the good Parisians to possess their King. His presence will promptly change the face of things: the poor people will no longer die of hunger; but this benefit will soon vanish like a dream if we do not fix the Royal family in our midst until the complete consecration of the Constitution. The 'People's Friend' shares in the joy of his dear fellow-citizens, but he will not give himself over to sleep."

And, in fact, Marat did not give himself over to sleep, for we find in the following numbers of the journal no slackening of the *defiance* against the Government and all those in authority which had been the characteristic of the *Ami du Peuple* from the beginning.

Now it so happened that a warrant had been issued by the Court of the Châtelet for the arrest of Marat on the very day of the King's arrival in Paris, though owing to events it was not executed on that day. The fact was that those members (the majority) of the Municipal Council who had come off second-best in their tussle with Marat, as narrated in the preceding chapter, were determined to pay him out on the first opportunity. The opportunity presented itself on the occasion of an attack made by Marat on one of the Secretaries of the Municipality, by name Joly. An individual in whose word Marat placed confidence had come to him, accusing the *Sieur Joly* of falsification of a document. This Marat, as was his custom, published in the next day's *Ami*. But the accusation in this case proved to be unfounded. Here, therefore, a fine opening was presented for the renewal of the attack on the redoubtable journalist, so little beloved by those in place and power. Hence, though the particular mandate issued for the 6th had to lapse, the Court immediately renewed it for the 8th. The Court of the Châtelet, it may be remarked, was the chief Royalist court of the Old Régime,



which, pending the changes that were being made, still retained a moribund but spasmodic existence.

That the authorities were at this time the more determined to make a serious effort to seize the person of Marat was also partly due to the fact of the fear he inspired, as one who through his writings had been the prime instigator of the march on Versailles. Add to this his advice to the people to retain their arms, and to the sections to show their want of confidence in the Municipality by withdrawing their cannon, which had been parked in the Hôtel de Ville. We should mention, moreover, that Marat played a personal part in the affair of the 5th, having been to Versailles on the day of the rising, though he does not appear to have stopped long. Camille Desmousins in his journal (No. 46) says: "Marat flies to Versailles and returns like lightning, making as much noise as four trumpets of the last Judgment summoning the dead to rise."

It will readily be understood, therefore, why the authorities did not dare to execute the mandate for the 6th, and why they lost no time in renewing it. Accordingly, on the evening of the 8th, a body of constables, followed by a carriage, presented themselves at the house where Marat lodged, in the Rue du Vieux Colombier. "It would have been all up with me," says Marat (*Ami*, No. 70), "if they could have succeeded in forcing the door, which

we had refused to open to them. The people's enemies regarded me as the primary motive-power of the insurrection which had saved the country. They set a price on my head, and to cover assassination they caused to be bruited abroad that I was in the dungeons of the Châtelet. Let me here acquit myself of a duty dear to my heart, towards so many good citizens who came to urge me to seek my safety in flight. I had informed two districts of the dangers that I was running ; one had frequent patrols made before my door, the other sent me some officers to see to my safety. Several friends, relying only on their zeal, took me from my house and conducted me to Versailles. I addressed my complaints to the Assembly. It would be ungenerous were I to pass in silence the reiterated efforts made by M. Freteau, its worthy president, to induce the Assembly to take them into consideration."

Marat had not been many days in hiding at Versailles before, owing to the perfidy or the pusillanimity of the innkeeper with whom he was lodging, he found himself denounced and a body of National Guards appearing at his room. They proved, however, to be "patriotic" in their sympathies, as was also their Colonel, the subsequently well-known Lecointre, who offered Marat an asylum at his own house. The Court of the Châtelet was not disposed, however, lightly to let its victim go, the more so that it came to the knowledge of the authorities that he had in preparation a pamphlet exposing Necker, whom

he had already denounced in the *Ami du Peuple* as a malversator of the national funds and a chief cause of the famine. The result was that the "People's Friend" found it prudent to leave Versailles and take refuge in a basement dwelling on the top of Montmartre, whence the journal was now issued. Spies, however, after some weeks found out his retreat, and on the 12th of December he was brought before the Court, but, owing to a technical defect in the indictment, the powers of the Court of the Châtelet and the subordinate courts being at this time very uncertain and confused, the prosecution fell through. Marat, in his own account of the proceedings, relates that early in the morning of the 12th of December the dwelling was assailed by a detachment of twenty men. "I opened the door to them," says Marat, "in my shirt. 'What can I do for you, gentlemen?' 'We have come to arrest you.' 'Your order? I will follow you, but permit me first of all to dress myself.' My papers having been seized, I am taken to the *Comité des Recherches* (one of the lower courts). I announced myself with the words: 'The "People's Friend," gentlemen, has come to see you; how many do you require to form a tribunal? Three. I will wait then.' So saying, I took a seat by the fire. These gentlemen having awakened me rather early, I had not breakfasted, so I accepted a cup of chocolate and entered into conversation. Nothing loth to question me, they inquired, what they

knew as well as I did, why I left Paris, where I had been, and how long I had remained in each place. My interrogatory ended, M. de Lafayette arrives, and the gentlemen of the committee present me to him. 'Who are those of my Etat-Major who have given you offence?' he asked. 'I will let you know in a future number of the *Ami*,' I replied."

Marat was now taken to the Commission of Police. On being reproached for his incessant denunciations, he observed, "Gentlemen, these are the disagreeables we have to put up with in the passage from slavery to liberty. Do you really believe that a Revolution such as this could accomplish itself without some misfortunes, without the shedding of some drops of blood? I entertain no hostile design against you, but had I to choose between my duty to the Commission of Police and my duty to liberty, my choice would be already made" (No. 71). Marat's outspoken candour had a powerful effect on the Commission, which at once set him at liberty, even offering a coach to carry him home. One of the members, in the ardour of his enthusiasm, embraced him, exclaiming, "Go, my friend; go, write and unmask the villains!"

Marat was naturally not displeased with the result of these interviews. He felt, he tells us, that the difference between the *Ancien* and *Nouveau Régime* was, after all, beginning to make itself felt. Profiting by the situation,

he went boldly the next day to demand of Lafayette the return of his confiscated presses. For, about three weeks previously, Marat had freed himself from the annoyance caused him by the unreliability of printers, who might be intimidated or might be bribed, by buying presses and setting them up in his own rooms, thus having the printing of the paper under his own eye. The presses were restored within the fourteen hours' delay he had given, and the "People's Friend" felt himself and his journal safe from arrest.

Acting on this assumption, he now changed his residence, descending from the heights of Montmartre into the district of the Cordeliers, where, at No. 39 Rue de la Vielle-Comédie, close to the Cordeliers' Club, he openly established the office of his paper and his own domicile.

The authorities now struck upon a new line for damaging Marat. A large number of agents were bribed to spread the report that Marat, in league with the Cordeliers' Club, was in the service of the aristocrats, endeavouring to foment a counter-revolution. These slanderers were to be found in the cafés, in the district assemblies, in the clubs. But this scheme proved also unproductive of any serious result. Marat by means of his paper could effectually foil such proceedings.

Finally, on the 22nd of January 1790, the Court of the Châtelet once more renewed its mandate of arrest, while the City Council

authorised Lafayette to choose three of the most reactionary battalions of his National Guard, with which to ensure its not missing fire this time. These consisted of three thousand men, foot and horse combined, who, on the appointed day, invaded the Cordeliers' quarter, and occupied the street where Marat resided. In addition to the above, several thousand men more were deemed necessary to surround the entire quarter, in fact, it is said twelve thousand men were under arms. The Royalist writer, Montjoie, in his *Histoire de la Conjuration de Philippe d'Orléans* (vol. ii. p. 157), has the following observations anent this military display :—"Lafayette marched against Marat an army of six thousand men, and posted them at the opening of every street; abutting on the house were two pieces of artillery. This was so extraordinary that, had I not been a witness of it myself, I should never have believed it. Conceive indeed this 'hero of two worlds' deploying forces so formidable against a crank whose only arm was his pen." At six o'clock in the morning the bailiffs of the Châtelet broke into Marat's apartment sword in hand. Their intended victim, however, had been forewarned and escaped, so the emissaries of the law had to content themselves with wrecking the place, pillaging journals and manuscripts, and placing official seals on the printing-presses, while certain grenadiers outside amused themselves by fixing lighted candles to their guns and shouting "Marat à la lanterne." In the

*Ami du Peuple* (No. 170) Marat writes : “ I was sleeping in a neighbouring street, when a young man attached to my office came to me in tears with the news that my house was surrounded by several battalions. At the same instant my host and his wife entered my room with an air of consternation ; they tried to speak, but could only tremble. ‘ Be quiet,’ I said, ‘ it is nothing ; only leave me alone.’ I am never more sang-froid than in the midst of imminent danger. Not wishing to go out *en déshabille*, for fear of exciting attention, I carefully made my toilette ; throwing an overcoat over me, and covering my head with a round hat, I put on a smiling air and took my departure. I gained the Gros-Caillon by passing through a detachment of the guard sent to arrest me. On the way I sought to distract my companion, and managed to preserve a good humour till about five o’clock in the evening, at which hour I awaited a proof of the sheet containing an account of the famous equipage. No one appearing, I had a presentiment of my impending misfortune, and the rest of the day was passed in sadness. They had got wind of the route I had taken. In the evening the house was invested with spies. I recognised them from behind a *jalousie*. It was suggested to me to escape by the roof on the approach of night, nevertheless I passed them in open daylight, giving my arm to a young person who accompanied me, and walking leisurely. As soon as it grew dark I repaired to the Grand

Basin de Luxembourg. Two friends were waiting there, to conduct me to the house of a lady in the neighbourhood. Finding no one at home I was 'thrown on the pavement,' at which one of my companions began to cry, but I dried his tears by bursting out laughing. We took a coach, and I went to seek an asylum at the bottom of the Marais. Arrived at the Grève, I saw the lantern which my enemies had destined for me two days previously, and I passed beneath it. On reaching the Rue de la Perle, I found there a person who was not unknown to me. To distract the curious it was necessary to simulate gaiety, till in the end it came itself. After a quarter of an hour's conversation I inquired of my host in a whisper if he were sure of the person present. 'As yourself,' he replied. 'All right,' I rejoined, and continued the conversation. After having had supper I went to bed. In the middle of the night a squadron of cavalry halted underneath my window, but finding, on half opening the shutters, that none of them had put foot to the ground, I quietly resumed my bed till the next morning. But it was necessary to decamp."

Marat, in fact, took immediate steps for leaving Paris and France, and in a few days was once more to be found in London.

As may be judged from the attention paid to him generally by the authorities, and especially from the extraordinary military preparations made for seizing his person, Marat had already



attained the position of being regarded on all sides as one of the foremost pillars of the Revolution. It so happened, moreover, that just at this time the revolutionary Cordeliers' Club, into which what was in the first instance a primary electoral assembly of the district had resolved itself, and of which Danton was the leading spirit, had its own particular quarrel with the Municipality. Into the details of this quarrel, which turned on questions of rights and jurisdiction, it is beyond our present purpose to enter, the interesting point respecting it being that it led the Cordeliers' Club and its leader Danton to make the cause of Marat in a special sense their own. The club, in fact, through Danton, fought the Châtelet and the Municipality inch by inch in the matter. Danton, who was an able lawyer, was not slow to find legal flaws in the slipshod proceedings of the old Royalist Court. The struggle was going on during the whole forenoon of the 22nd, and was only ended on Danton's promise to accept the decision of the National Assembly. The afternoon was therefore occupied in pleading the cause at the bar of the "Constituent."

Here, however, Danton and his colleagues were not successful, the Assembly eventually overruling their objections and condemning the attitude of the Cordeliers, at the same time adding a clause that it relied upon their patriotism for executing its will. There was nothing now left to the district but to send two members to the commander of the forces, informing him

that they no longer had any right to obstruct his action. Marat's house was therefore again entered, but, as we have seen, Marat was not there but in hiding, and succeeded in evading the attentions of the Châtelet and the Municipality by a flight to England. This affair, which was the first to bring the name of Danton prominently before the general public, formed the opening of the latter's career as an active revolutionary force, as opposed to a mere club orator.

During his enforced residence in England, though the *Ami du Peuple* had, of course, to be abandoned, Marat was not idle in a revolutionary sense, occupying himself with writing three pamphlets, the *Appel à la Nation*, the *Lettre sur l'Ordre judiciaire*, and the *Seconde Dénonciation contre M. Necker*. Of these, the first was the most important. It is, in fact, a powerful defence of his action and indictment of that of the authorities. In characteristic eighteenth-century classical style, Marat writes, "Before falling beneath the blows of tyranny, I shall have the consolation of covering my cowardly persecutors with opprobrium; I shall afterwards envelop my head in my mantle and shall present my neck to the steel of the assassin." He defends himself against the charge of violence in his writings. "I have been reproached," he says, "for having been unmeasured in my demands. But what would you have? Embittered by the grievances addressed to me from all sides against the agents of power, harassed by the crowd of oppressed who had

recourse to me, revolted at the continual abuse of authority, at the ever-renewed attempts of the supporters of despotism, how could I be otherwise than overwhelmed with indignation against the authors of such crimes, how could I fail to exhibit with regard to them all the horror that filled my soul?" He points out how the Assembly, the Municipality, and Lafayette, by the action with respect to him on the 22nd of January, had risked exposing the capital to the horrors of Civil War. "When the dream of life shall be about to finish for me," he says, "I shall not complain of my sorrowful existence if I have but contributed to the welfare of humanity, if I have but left a name respected by the wicked and beloved by good men." The letter *Sur l'Ordre judiciaire* is an unimportant technical pamphlet of eight pages. On the other hand, the *Nouvelle Dénonciation de M. Marat, l'Ami du Peuple, contre M. Necker*, a long pamphlet of forty pages, consists of a trenchant criticism of the policy of the Minister of Finance. Marat had already issued from his press in Paris a denunciation of Necker which had had a considerable vogue.

In this, his first "denunciation," he had criticised the mode in which Necker's fortune, amounting, it is said, to over thirteen millions, was acquired by the discounting of Canadian bills and the ruin of the French East India Company. Marat insists that wealth obtained in this way by doubtful tricks of stock-jobbing

is anything but a title of honour to the possessor. Setting a gambler in stocks at the head of the finances was simply to ruin the nation. The brochure then proceeds to deal with Necker's conduct as a minister, accusing him of having been the prime agent in the production of the famine, by encouraging forestalling, with the sinister motive, he hints, of promoting reaction by disgusting people with the new régime. He is further accused of raising a revenue by imposing a tax ruinous to the poor, rather than by economies in the civil lists, the sale of the Royal demesnes, or the abolition or reduction of sinecures. In conclusion, he challenges the minister to answer his accusations. The only answer he got from those in authority was the mandate of arrest of the 22nd of January. Under these circumstances, Marat determined to drive home his attack by a second pamphlet. In this "new denunciation" of Necker, as he terms it, he gives additional proof of the charges made in the former attack. He readily admits Necker's capacity as a financier, but this very ability, he contends, is what fills him with alarm, and he here furnishes what he deems conclusive proofs of a ministerial attempt to favour reactionary tendencies by the production of an artificial scarcity. Both the pamphlets had a large sale, and contributed greatly to strengthen Marat's already powerful hold on revolutionary public opinion.

The "People's Friend" (the cognomen he

had now familiarly acquired from the title of his journal) remained for nearly four months in England, returning to Paris on the 18th of May 1790. The course of events had now rendered it apparently safe for Marat to reside in Paris. On the 26th of February the Assembly had enacted an equality in the matter of criminal justice; on the 16th of March it had definitely abolished *lettres de cachet* and all measures of arbitrary arrest; and on the 30th of April it had instituted the jury system for all offences, a measure which Marat had himself demanded in his *Lettre sur l'Ordre judiciaire*. Not only had the Legislature placed the administration of justice on a new footing, but public opinion generally had set in strongly against the arbitrary action of the Châtelet, backed by the Municipality and the Ministry, in the matter of the 22nd of January. There was therefore no likelihood of any further proceedings being taken on the old basis. Immediately on his return, Marat resumed his journal, taking it up at the number following that at which he had left off, which happened to be No. 106. It was not long, however, before the fearless journalist gave occasion for the representatives of law and order to intervene under cover of a new press-law. On the 10th of June the Assembly passed a decree fixing the Civil List at twenty-five millions. All the advanced journals uttered a cry of indignation at impoverished France, with a famine at its doors, being thus compelled to furnish the Monarch

with the means of subsidising traitors to the Revolution. The *Ami du Peuple*, as may be imagined, was nothing behindhand in energetic remonstrance, but even now Marat was only attacked under cover of a general measure against incendiary journalists. Fréron, the editor of the *Orateur du Peuple*, was the first to be pounced upon on this occasion; then the emissaries of the law betook themselves to the printer of the *Ami du Peuple*, for Marat since his return had been obliged to again have recourse to printing-firms. Marat, however, was not himself discovered, although within the building at the time. On the advice of his friends he went into hiding; and now in fact began that life in cellars which lasted with little intermission for over two years, and which so seriously undermined the never too robust health of the "People's Friend." The *Ami du Peuple* continued for the most part to appear regularly, but the person of its author remained hidden to all save a few trusted friends. Legendre, after the death of Marat, boasted of having hidden him during these two years in his cellars. It is, however, certain that he spent much of this time in the cellars underneath the Cordeliers' Club. He also, it is alleged, hid himself for some time in some quarries on Montmartre.

Referring to his life at this time, he says (*Ami*, No. 170): "Exposed to a thousand dangers, encompassed by spies, police-agents, and assassins, I hurried from retreat to retreat, often unable to

sleep for two consecutive nights in the same bed." Guiraut, in his funeral oration on Marat, speaking of his life during the period in question, states that he was devoured by the most frightful misery, his only outer covering being a simple blue cloak, and that he usually had a handkerchief steeped in vinegar bound round the top of his head. Working, often day and night, in these damp, subterranean retreats, by the miserable light of a small oil lamp, constantly burning, the fumes of which poisoned the low, ill-ventilated apartment, his eyelids would become badly inflamed, and he contracted a continual insomnia, which combined with the malady from which he was suffering and his originally highly-strung and delicate constitution to make his life one long torture. His journalistic activity during this time points to the most marvellous instance of human fortitude and prolonged determination on record. Knowing the circumstances, we do not need to wonder that his pen sometimes outran the limits of parliamentary expression, or that his revolutionary zeal now and then found vent in truculency of language.

Marat, as has been already mentioned, just before the outbreak of the Revolution, had been attacked by a painful disease. Much mystery has been made, with the usual insinuations in a similar case, with respect to Marat's malady. There is, however, no doubt whatever that it was the skin disease known as pruritus, the cure of which offers little difficulty

to modern medicine, though its origin remains still doubtful. To eighteenth-century therapeutics, however, modern treatment and remedies were unknown, and the disease was regarded as incurable, and even as mortal.

Beginning locally, in Marat's case at the perineum, it usually spreads, if neglected or improperly treated, over the whole body. In addition to the inflammatory irritation suffered by the victim, often proving well-nigh unendurable, he was at times attacked by racking nervous headaches.

In addition to his journal, Marat now adopted a new measure of agitation, to wit, placards. It having become known that the ambassador of the Court of Vienna was negotiating with the King for a free passage for the Austrian troops through French territory on their way to Belgium, Marat felt the matter to be too urgent for treatment in his journal alone, and at once wrote a placard denouncing the counter-revolutionary stratagem, which he had affixed all over Paris. It was headed "*C'en est fait de nous*" (It is all over with us), and proceeded to denounce this manœuvre of the enemy as a plot to crush the Revolution by force of arms, and reinstate "Royalism" in all its former glory. The placard terminated with these words, often made a notable *point d'appui* by the calumniators of the "People's Friend":—"Five or six hundred heads lopped off would have assured you repose and happiness; a false humanity has



restrained your arm and suspended your blows ; it will cost the lives of millions of your brothers."

This remark has, of course, been eagerly seized upon by Marat's enemies as a convincing proof of his bloodthirstiness. That it should be so is only in accordance with the usual practice of the upholders and sycophants of established authority at all times, to seize with a hawk-like grip on anything tending to damage the enemies of that order and to draw off attention from the crimes and atrocities committed in its name and on its behalf. The classical instance of this sort of thing is to be found in the pretended "horror and indignation" expressed by the organs of the dominant classes, at the time of the fall of the Paris Commune, at the execution by the despairing people of Paris of a few representative men of those classes, while these very same organs had scarce a word of reprobation at the indiscriminate slaughter in cold blood of the men and women and children of the Proletariat which had been taking place for days previously, and the *deliberate murder of prisoners of war for weeks beforehand*. The doctrine is thus insidiously inculcated, both directly and indirectly, that a defender of the established order has the right to murder at his pleasure in the defence of this order, and the exercise of this privilege is often a proof of decision and capacity ; but when an enemy of the established order dares to lift a finger, even in self-defence, he instantly becomes a criminal and a monster. The means

of influencing public opinion in this direction is naturally always in the hands of wealth and privilege—the platform, the pulpit, and, above all, the press. The injustice of such judgments matters not; the object is attained if the conscience of wealth and privilege is salved thereby, and the mental vision of that large section of the general public which does not enter into the facts of a case is effectively hoodwinked. There is no doubt whatever that, by such utterances as these, Marat, whose single-minded object was to save the Revolution from the various plots which there is no denying were at this time constantly being hatched against it, was only concerned to keep public attention alive to the manœuvres of the Court and its satellites. As is justly observed in the excellent article on Marat, constituting, so far as I am aware, the first defence of the “People’s Friend” in the English language, in the *Fortnightly Review* for February 1874, from the pen of Mr. Bowen Graves: “Threats of bloodshed are, no doubt, only too frequent, but always in language such as, to an impartial mind, excludes the idea of calculation. One day it is ten thousand heads that must fall, the next it is a hundred thousand, a third it drops to fifty thousand, a fourth to twenty, and so on. A few months before his death, he tells us in his journal what he meant by them: ‘I used them, he says, ‘with a view to produce a strong impression on men’s minds, and to destroy all fatal security.’ There is nothing to be found in the

pages of the *Ami du Peuple* approaching in cold bloodthirstiness what is to be met with repeatedly in the *Actes des Apôtres*, for example, or the *Journal de la Cour et de la Ville*. Or, to take another example, 'It will cost ten thousand lives to save the country,' says one man; 'When compromise was proposed,' says another, 'to the effect that the Government should enter Paris, but not the army, I replied that if it should cost a river of blood the army should enter first.'"

Marat and the Commune of 1871 have, of course, been represented as abnormal monstrosities of wickedness, but Adolphe Louis Thiers, who was responsible for the deliverance which closes the above quotation, has gone down to history as an eminent statesman, a lover of his country, and a champion of respectability and moral order. "If I knock you down, mind, it's nothing, but if you hit me back again it's a dastardly outrage!" The above observation, represented by *Punch* as addressed by a special constable to a Chartist, has its application in every struggle between constituted authority, backed by wealth and privilege, and revolution. Officialism cannot commit crimes; the most it can do is to make mistakes. Revolution, on the contrary, it would seem, cannot make mistakes, it can only commit crimes. It is true that Marat did not believe in the sacrosanctity of reactionists, as against those of his own side. On this point, indeed, he has a note in No. 121 of the *Ami*. "Will they accuse me of being cruel," he says, "who

cannot even see an insect suffer? but when I find that, in order to spare a few drops of blood, one risks shedding floods of it, I am indignant in spite of myself at our false maxims of humanity, and at our foolish regard for our cruel enemies; fools that we are, we fear to cause them a scratch; . . . let them but be masters one day, and you will soon see them overrun the provinces, fire and sword in hand, striking down all those who offer them any resistance, massacring the friends of the country, slaughtering women and children, and reducing our cities to ashes."

Though the law relative to the press had not yet been passed by the Constituent, the placard "*C'en est fait de nous*" was denounced in the Assembly by the reactionary deputy, Malouet, on the 31st of July, and on his motion a decree was passed ordering the Royal prosecutor of the Court of the Châtelet immediately to take proceedings against the authors, printers, and circulators of writings exciting the people to insurrection against the laws, shedding of blood, or the overturning of the Constitution. This decree, which was, of course, meant to cover Marat's placard, was rescinded two days later on the motion of the Girondist, Pétion, on the ground that its vague expressions might lend themselves to arbitrary prosecutions; but at the same time proceedings were ordered to be taken against the incriminating placard. Nothing daunted, on the 11th of August Marat issued a second placard,

of "order" in the town. The King and the majority of the Assembly exasperated the revolutionary parties outside on this occasion by specially thanking the General for his conduct, and adjuring him to continue in the same course.

Marat's placard is headed "*L'affreux Reveil*" (The Frightful Awakening). The Reaction both in the Assembly and outside would have had the public regard the recalcitrant Swiss and their French colleagues as no more than mutineers, and clamoured for the execution of a number of the survivors. "Barbarians," writes Marat in this placard, "these men whom you are going to massacre are your brothers; they are innocent; they are oppressed; that which you did on the 14th of July they are doing to-day; they are opposing themselves to their slaughterers. Will you punish them for following your example and repelling their tyrants?" Marat continues, after urging anew the innocence of the revolted battalions and the guilt of their commanders: "The National Assembly itself, by the vice of its composition, by the depravity of the greater part of its members, by the unjust vexations and tyrannical decrees which are daily forced from it, no longer merits your confidence." He goes on to describe as a band of enemies of the Revolution and of liberty "those whom you have the stupidity to regard as representatives of that nation whose mortal enemies they are; these are the men you regard as legislators, and whose decrees you have the folly to respect."

The placard ends with an appeal to the people to come to the succour of their brethren, and to disillusionise the citizen-soldiers. "I invite all the Swiss," he says, "to support their compatriots ; disarm the German satellites who slaughter your fellow-citizens ; arrest their officers and let the avenging axe immolate them at last on the altar of liberty !"

This affair of Châteaux Vieux or of Nancy, as it was variously called, naturally for days filled the journals of the time on both sides, the *Ami du Peuple* included. Many "patriots" were disheartened, not a few of the friends of liberty seeing therein the indefinite postponement, if not the death, of their hopes. Loustalot, the popular journalist, and the editor of the *Révolutions de Paris*, died of grief at the blow he thought the Revolution had received. Marat has an eloquent article on the subject of his death. "As long as the sun shall illumine the earth," he exclaims, "the friends of liberty will recall Loustalot with tenderness, their children will each day bless his memory, and his name, inscribed in the glorious annals of the Revolution, will descend with glory to our latest descendants ! Dear and sacred shade, if thou still preservest some remembrance of the things of life in the abode of the blest, suffer that a brother in arms whom thou hast never seen may water with his tears thy mortal remains and throw some flowers on thy tomb ! Let our faithless representatives put on mourning for the oppressors of liberty—children of the

country will never wear it save for its defenders ; and we, their honest advocates, let us redouble our energy in sustaining their cause, and repair by our zeal the cruel loss we have suffered !” In the end, the revolted regiments were avenged, the authorities had to capitulate, and the survivors among the victims were received in high festival by the Paris populace.

This Nancy affair contributed to augment Marat’s already powerful influence considerably. About the same time took place the resignation of the finance minister, Necker, on the excuse of fatigue and disgust. Respecting this event, Marat says (*Ami*, No. 214), in an article in the form of a letter to the late minister, “You accuse destiny of the ill-success attending the events of your career. How would it be if, like the ‘People’s Friend,’ the prey of a mortal malady, you had renounced the preservation of your life in order to enlighten the people on their duties ; if you had been reduced to bread and water in order to consecrate all you possess to public affairs ; if, in order to save the wretched, you had quarrelled with all the world, without preserving for yourself a single refuge under the sun !” And again : “If, fleeing from asylum to asylum, you had been driven to live in a cellar to save a stupid, blind, and ungrateful people !” But amid all his troubles, public and private, one cause of satisfaction, alike public and private, awaited Marat. On the 6th of September 1790, the Constituent Assembly formally abolished the ancient Court

of the Châtelet. This measure Marat had been ceaselessly demanding for a year past, denouncing the effete tribunal as a hotbed of reaction and corruption. As to the composition of the new National High Court, which was to take its place, Marat was vehement in his demands for the rejection of all functionaries belonging to the "Judicature of the *Ancien Régime*," except where such had afforded conclusive evidence of patriotism.

On the 14th of September a notice appeared in the *Ami du Peuple* to the effect that a number was in preparation dealing with the conduct of Lafayette, just as the celebrated number of the 22nd of January, the day of the momentous attack on Marat's house, had been devoted to the delinquencies of Necker. Now the object of the projected attack was determined at all costs to do his best to prevent this number appearing. As has already been stated, his own presses having been confiscated at the time of the abortive attempt to seize him which led to his flight, Marat had on his return from England been compelled once more to give the production of the *Ami du Peuple* into the hands of ordinary printers. It was accordingly against the Sieur André, Marat's printer, and the Dame Méginier, whose function it was to distribute the copies of the paper to the street vendors, that the attacks were directed. The following day, the 15th, at one o'clock in the morning (*Ami*, No. 224), the street where the printing-



At this time the *Ami du Peuple* was the most widely-read paper in Paris of all the revolutionary press. Lafayette was now at the height of his power, and the risks run by "patriot" journalists were enormous. Two further attempts were made this year (1790) to prevent the issue of the paper and to obtain possession of the person of Marat. One domiciliary visit was made on the 2nd of December, and another on the 14th of the same month, but both without any important result. The remarkable thing was the astonishing energy of the man, who could find means, in spite of confiscation, the smashing of presses, and similar devices, to prevent an interruption in the issue of his journal for even a single day.

Of Marat's exceptional ability as a reader of character, in spite of some failures, there can be no two opinions. In July 1790 he had already thrown out a word of warning concerning the popular idol Mirabeau, whom he suspected, even at that time, of intrigues with the Court. He points out that all reactionary measures of the Constituent Assembly had been consecrated by the eloquence of Mirabeau, and this eloquence it was, said he, which blinded people who would not have done so otherwise into accepting them. Marat continued to keep an eye on the great orator, and became more and more convinced of his venality as time went on. "Two years ago," writes Marat in No. 290 of the *Ami*, "Riquetti (Mirabeau) was obliged to send his breeches to

the pawn-shop (*mont de piété*) for six francs ; to-day he swims in opulence, and has three mistresses whom he loads with gifts." He proceeds in a subsequent number to reckon up the sums Mirabeau paid for various possessions, which he found to amount to 2,850,000 livres (francs). Two years later—on the discovery of the celebrated iron chest in the wainscoting of the Tuileries—convincing proofs were found of Mirabeau's corruption. Bouillé states in his *Mémoires* (p. 198) that the King had told him he could always count on Mirabeau to further his counter-revolutionary plots, that he had just paid him 600,000 livres, and had granted him an income of 50,000 a month, with limitless promises in proportion to the services rendered. This time, when at the height of his power, the fall and flight of his old enemy Lafayette was predicted by Marat. Similarly, at a later period, he prophesied the treachery and desertion of Dumouriez. We must not forget, too, the last article Marat wrote,—the proof of it was splashed with his blood,—which contained a precise forecast of the development of the public life of Barère, who at that time enjoyed the confidence of the most accredited "patriots."

By the beginning of the year 1791, the political power of Marat had reached its height. Not content with attacking by legal methods, we find one battalion of Lafayette's National Guards pledging themselves on oath to assassinate Marat ; on the other hand, he had many secret friends in

other quarters, even amongst the National Guards themselves and their officers. Thus, before the perquisition of the 14th of December, he received, in all, seventeen letters from such, warning him of the intended raid, and urging him to place himself in safety. "With such men," exclaims Marat in one place, "we need not despair of the public safety." Needless to say, however, among Lafayette's guards they were a small minority. Marat having on one occasion sent a number of his paper to the battalion quartered in the section Bonne Nouvelle, it was ordered to be publicly burnt in the presence of the whole company in the courtyard of the barracks. The most frivolous pretexts were employed by men of the moderate party to discredit the object of their fear and hatred. Thus Marat was accused of not having formally taken the civic oath, to which he pertinently observed, that his civic oath was graven in letters of flame, in the files of the *Ami du Peuple*. In addition to this, he objected to an oath which pledged the juror to unconditional fidelity to the King, to laws good or bad, and to the Constitution in the form in which it had left the hands of the Constituent Assembly. He proceeds, on the other hand, to formulate various principles for which the *Ami du Peuple* has combated, and which he is prepared to swear to with all his heart. The editor of a Lafayettist print made an abortive attempt at a libel action against the "People's Friend." The Mayor Bailly, having on this occasion taken

his seat as President of the Tribunal, had to be reminded that he was personally interested in the case before him, after which he retired, amid the applause of the assembled public. A grenadier who happened to be present, standing up on a bench, declared that he was the "soul of Marat," and that before Marat should be attacked he would fall.

On the 3rd of April 1791, Mirabeau died. He had been regarded by all parties as the man of the situation, the "man of destiny" in fact, destined to carry France through the throes of the Revolution and establish the new constitution on an impregnable basis. His death was therefore universally viewed as a public calamity. The popular feeling on the subject is illustrated by the story of the guest at one of the Palais Royal restaurants, who, on remarking to the waiter that it was a fine day, received for answer, "Yes, monsieur, but M. Mirabeau is dead." We have said that the death of the great orator was universally looked on as a public calamity. This is not strictly accurate, for there was one notable exception to the general voice of approbation and lamentation. The solitary discordant note was struck by the irrepressible "People's Friend." We have already seen the judgment he had formed of Mirabeau's character and public life, and shall not therefore be surprised to find in the *Ami* for the 4th of April (No. 419) an article headed "Funeral Oration on Riquetti, called 'Mirabeau,'" couched in the following

terms : " People, give thanks to the gods ! Your most redoubtable enemy has fallen beneath the scythe of Fate. Riquetti is no more ; he dies victim of his numerous treasons, victim of his too tardy scruples, victim of the barbarous foresight of his atrocious accomplices. . . . Adroit rogues, to be found in all circles, have sought to play upon your pity, and already duped with their false discourse, you regret this traitor as the most zealous of your defenders ; they have represented his death as a public calamity, and you bewail him as a hero, who has sacrificed himself for you, and as the saviour of your country. Will you always be deaf to the voice of prudence ; will you always sacrifice public affairs to your blindness ? The life of Riquetti was stained by a thousand crimes ; let a black veil henceforward cover the shameful fabric, since it can no longer injure you, and let the recital scandalise the living no more ! But beware of prostituting your incense ; keep your tears for your honest champions ; remember that he was one of the born lacqueys of the despot ; that he only found fault with the Court in order to gain your suffrages ; that he was scarcely elected to the Estates-General to defend your interests before he sold your most sacred rights ; that after the fall of the Bastille he showed himself the most ardent supporter of despotism ; that he abused a hundred times his talents to put again into the monarch's hands all the forces of authority ; that it is to him you owe all the

fatal decrees that have placed you again under the yoke and that have riveted your irons : the decrees concerning martial law, the suspensive veto, the independence of the delegates of the nation, the silver mark, the supreme executive power, the congratulations of the assassins of Metz, the monopoly of the currency by small *assignats*, the permission to emigrate accorded to the conspirators, etc. !”

The flight of the King and of the Royal family, which took place on the 21st of June 1791, Marat had foreseen as probable more than a month before. In his number of the 22nd of March he had explained the situation, pointing out that a hostile army of 24,000 men was encamped on the frontiers, and that the National Guards of many departments were inadequately supplied with arms and ammunition, and moreover were commanded by reactionary officers. All that prevented a move of overt hostility on the part of Austria and those in league with her was the fact that the King, for whose safety they feared, was in Paris. This hostage once safely across the frontier, the enemy would advance on Paris, where the Assembly and “traitorous Municipality” would humble themselves before the monarch ; a portion of the National Guards would join the enemy of the people, while the people, without arms or money, would be offered the alternative of slavery or death. These remarks were made *à propos* of the proposal of the Court to transfer

itself from the Tuileries to Saint Cloud, the idea being, of course, that the projected flight would be easier from there than from the centre of the metropolis. "It is all up with liberty, it is all up with the country," concludes Marat, "if we suffer the Royal family to quit the Tuileries!"

The abortive result of the flight, and the circumstances attending the discovery and enforced return of the King, henceforth half a prisoner in his own capital, are too well known to need recital in the present work. The affair, it is hardly necessary to remind the reader, sealed the fate of the monarchy, already shaken to its foundations. It survived, it is true, rather more than twelve months from this time, but during those months it was plainly tottering to its fall. "Behold him," writes Marat in his number of the 27th of June (*Ami*, 503), "brought once again within our walls, this crowned brigand, perjurer, traitor, and conspirator, without honour and without soul! In the very midst of the procession which led him prisoner, he seemed insensible to the infamy of being dragged in a chariot filled with the criminal accomplices of his misdeeds, to the infamy of being exposed to the eyes of a countless number of his fellow-citizens, formerly his slaves. Any other would have died of sorrow and shame, but he only understands animal sufferings. The whole time that he was in the hands of the soldiers of the country, he did not cease to

entreat them to do him no harm, and he thought of nothing but of begging them for food, and above all for drink."

The republican sentiment that had been growing for some time in the clubs and the popular assemblies now found definite expression in a loud demand for abdication. This culminated in the drawing up of a gigantic petition, which was laid on the "Altar of the Country," a wooden erection established in the Champs de Mars the previous summer (1790), on the occasion of the great festival of the Constitution. Here all were invited by the popular societies to sign, on Sunday the 17th of July 1791. Crowds thronged the great open space from early morning onwards. Two supposed spies, found underneath the wooden erection, were hanged at the lamp-post. Finally, at about half-past seven in the evening, the crowd showing no signs of diminution, Mayor Bailly and the Municipal authorities appeared, bearing with them the red flag, at that time the symbol of martial law. So small, however, it is alleged, was this emblem as to be only visible to those immediately around. The municipals were followed by battalions of National Guards, the upshot of the whole being the order to fire, without, however, it is alleged, the three summonses to disperse prescribed by the law having been first made. The order was followed by a fusillade, in which some hundreds were declared to have fallen, killed or wounded. Such



was the celebrated "Massacre of the Champs de Mars," in the initiation of which Bailly and Lafayette were regarded as the leading spirits, and which constitutes one more of the leading landmarks in the course of the French Revolution. The event caused a panic in the ranks of the revolutionary party generally. Numbers of journalists dropped their pens and fled. Marat, almost alone, remained in the breach, and he as bold and as outspoken as ever. But, however brave he might be himself, Marat could not succeed in infusing his courage into printers and distributors, and three days after the events described the journal had to be suspended, failing the services of these indispensable adjuncts to journalistic enterprise. The panic in the ranks of the "patriotic" caused by the affair of the 17th was complete; between the 21st of July and the 10th of August no number of the *Ami* appeared. We should not omit to mention here, as illustrating the devotion which the man whom Carlyle characterises as an "obscene spectrum" could call forth in the fair sex, that the only one of those engaged in the production of the *Ami* who did not desert was a young woman, who remained till she was arrested by the emissaries of Bailly.

On the panic subsiding somewhat, Marat found means to republish his paper, and on the 10th of August the hawkers were again to be heard crying the *Ami du Peuple* in the streets of Paris. Referring to the slaughter of the 17th

of the previous month, Marat writes, "If heaven deigns to mix itself up in affairs here below, may these monsters soon become the objects of its avenging anger! May the people rise at once in all corners of the kingdom and immolate them to its just fury!" But though the *Ami* had reappeared, its publication was no longer so uninterrupted as it had been before the affair of the Champs de Mars. But there was no "climbing down" in the tone of the articles. "For myself," says Marat, "the Prince will never be anything else but a tyrant, his ministers atrocious traitors, the lacqueys who concoct his decrees perfidious scoundrels, and well-nigh all the present public functionaries prostituted rascals." Meanwhile the time for the dissolution of the "Constituent Assembly" and the election of its successor, the so-called "Legislative Assembly," drew on apace. The Constituent Assembly, as the reader will remember, was simply the old assembly of the States-General amalgamated as one parliamentary body. The new Legislative Assembly was to be convoked under the somewhat complicated electoral laws the Constituent Assembly had passed. In a moment of self-abnegation the members of the Constituent had resolved not to allow themselves to be nominated for the Legislative, so the new parliament would consist of entirely fresh men. Marat hoped that it would prove better than its predecessor. For this reason he seems to have resolved to terminate his career as journalist on

the dissolution of the parliamentary body whose measures had been the object of such scathing criticism from his pen. With the solitary exception of the "Declaration of the Rights of Man," which was an abstract statement of principle, he regarded all the work done by the Constituent as, when not overtly reactionary, tainted with reactionary tendencies. His number of the 8th of September (No. 549) contains his journalistic farewell to the outgoing parliament. He here declares that he is tired of risking the galleys, or possibly the hangman's rope, in defending the rights of the nation and telling the King home-truths, and that he proposes henceforward renouncing the foolish enterprise of sacrificing himself for the public good and taking steps for the rehabilitation of his shattered fortune, having been reduced to the greatest straits in the pursuit of this insensate object. He had even, he says, been robbed by citizens with whom he had sought an asylum. Marat had, in fact, resolved not merely to cease the publication of his journal, but to leave France altogether and return to England. The *Ami* of the 21st of September (No. 556) contains "the last farewell of the 'People's Friend' to the country." He here recalls the persecutions he has undergone, during the last eighteen months, in pursuance of the people's cause. "I should have been protected, caressed, fêted, if I could but have resolved to keep silence. How much gold would have been showered upon me had I

been content to dishonour my pen !” He has, he says, resisted these temptations and preserved a clear conscience. Knowing as we now do the amounts the Royalist party were prepared to spend at the time, in bribing the leaders of public opinion, no one can reasonably doubt that Marat speaks the truth when he intimates that he might have been a millionaire had he chosen to sell himself. Instead of riches, which he might have had, he is left, he says, with some debts, “with which I have been saddled by the faithless manipulators to whom I had at first confided the printing and the publication of my paper. I am about to abandon to these creditors the remains of the little that I have, and I fly without money, without help, without resources, to vegetate in the only corner of the earth where it will still be permitted me to breathe in peace, preceded by the clamour of calumny, slandered by the public rascals whom I have exposed, charged with the maledictions of all the enemies of the country, abhorred by the great and by those in authority, and branded in all the ministerial cabinets as a monster to stifle. Perhaps it will not be long before I am forgotten by the very people to whose safety I sacrificed myself, happy if the regrets of patriots should accompany me ; but I take with me the witness of a good conscience that I shall be followed by the esteem of all true souls.” Marat seems at this time to have been alternating between hope and despair with regard to public affairs. He had hopes

indeed from the fresh blood of the Assembly about to be elected, but he also, it seems, had doubts as to whether the French people were made for liberty. The above farewell of his may be read in connection with an article on this question a few weeks before. "We so perfectly resemble," he says, "the Romans under the despots who so tyrannised over them after the fall of the Republic, that it is impossible to read *Satires* VI., VII., and VIII. of Juvenal, written under Domitian, and not recognise our gallant ladies, our men of letters, and our former nobles in the picture Juvenal gives us of those of Rome. But it is in *Satire* XVII. that the Parisians may best see themselves, in the portrait there offered of avarice, rapacity, fraud, rascality, perfidy, brigandage, and the crimes of all sorts which sullied Rome" (*Ami*, No. 539). Marat then translates portions of Juvenal as illustrating the insolence of the military and the partiality of the Courts.

The number containing the farewell above quoted was intended to be the last written from Paris, since on the evening of the day on which it appeared Marat set out for England. He had evidently, however, made arrangements for a continuance of the publication for some days longer. The following number is dated from Clermont, the next from Breteuil, and the next from Amiens. By the 27th the "People's Friend" found himself on his way back to Paris. Why he changed his resolution is not quite clear, but the

circumstances are thus given, in No. 560 of the *Ami*, by Marat himself. "The 'People's Friend,'" he says, "having entered the Hôtel d'Angleterre at Amiens, hears a spy remark to a companion that he recognises him. No doubt there was an amnesty, but the 'People's Friend' is always a good prize." Marat feigns not to see anything, walks leisurely, and suddenly disappears behind a hedge. A shepherd passing, he requests to be conducted on the road to Paris by a circuitous route, as he had abandoned the intention of proceeding to London. The man offered him as a guide a patriot, an old French Guard ; so Marat, having donned the habit of a peasant, proceeded with his companion. At Beauvais a cabriolet is obtained, and on the morrow Marat is once more established in Paris.

The 1st of October saw the opening of the second French parliament, called the Legislative Assembly ; if the "Constituent" had been dominated, in the main, by the moderate Constitutionalists, the "Legislative" was largely influenced by the principles of the Girondin party, which formed a compact phalanx of its members. The Girondins, it is true, represented a more advanced phase of the political movement than the Constitutionalists. In principle at least they were Republican, while the Constitutionalists swore by the theory of a more or less limited monarchy. But, as has often enough been said before, the Girondins were pedants to the backbone. They believed in a Republic

based on the respectability of the cultured bureaucrat of the period, on "virtue," on classic models; and they seem to have been firmly convinced that the perfect way to its realisation lay through oratory and well-turned periods. Though perhaps less corrupt and less directly self-seeking in their aims, they had as little notion of the economic change implied in the Revolution or of its true historic significance as the Constitutionals, into whose place they stepped.

The Girondins took their name from the department of the Gironde, their three chief orators, Vergniaud, Guadet, and Gensonné, hailing from Bordeaux. The nominal leader of the party, however, being Brissot, they were also called Brissotins. Brissot, in fact, at this time was the leader of the entire left in the Legislative Assembly, for the split, which in the Convention developed into the great antagonism between the "Gironde" and the "Montagne," was not as yet unmistakably apparent, although its beginnings might have been readily noticed by a careful observer.

Marat, who was remaining in Paris in the hope of seeing better results from the new "Legislative" than those obtained from the old "Constituent" Assembly, was, as one might imagine, particularly disgusted when, on its third sitting, the new Parliament took a solemn oath to maintain intact the Constitution established by its predecessor — a constitution

which was notoriously, in many points, out of harmony with the principles on which the Revolution was supposed to be founded. Martial law, the inviolability of legislators, arbitrary restrictions on press freedom,—these and other things of a similar nature might be considered as part of the Constitution which the new Assembly swore to preserve.

“Friends of the country,” exclaims Marat (*Ami*, No. 568), “this buffoonery is the tomb of dawning liberty, the new Conscript Fathers are worth no more than the old !” Nevertheless, Marat continued to struggle with the forces against him. Notwithstanding a Brissotin influence in the Legislature, notwithstanding even a ministry mainly composed of Brissotin elements, the new body—even if revolutionary phrases were more on the lips of its orators—Marat felt to be pursuing substantially the same course as the old one. But, however despondent might be the “People’s Friend” himself, however thankless he might feel the task to be in which he was engaged, never was there a time when his journal was more eagerly read, nor his influence greater with the public at large, than during these three last months of 1791. The *Ami du Peuple* now obviously stood out from all its contemporaries as the Parisian journal of widest circulation and greatest influence. Marat had become a political force, not only to be feared by those in authority, but to be reckoned with by all. Despair, however, of the situation,



acting on a constitution already enfeebled by chronic disease and overwork, gained the upper hand before the year expired. On the 14th of December appears a second farewell to the readers of the redoubtable *Ami*. "Oh, my country!" cries Marat, "what frightful destiny the future reserves for thee! A fatal decree of pitiless fortune will always hold the veil of illusion and error pressed to thy forehead, to prevent thee from profiting by thy resources, and to deliver thee defenceless into the hands of thy cruel enemies! To-day there remains no means of preventing thy ruin, and thy faithful friend has no other duty to render thee than that of deploring thy sad destinies, and of shedding tears of blood over thy too prolonged disasters." The next day, the 15th of December, Marat once more set out for London, determined this time that nothing should induce him to swerve from his purpose. Only a day or two before, Bourdon, one of the leading men of the section of the Louvre, had written to him exhorting him to spare himself while it was yet time, urging the uselessness of attempting to rouse the "stupid citizens of Paris" to action. "For two years," says he, "they have not ceased to decry the 'People's Friend' as an incendiary. They will soon see the torrents of blood which will flow because they had feared to shed a few drops as he had advised, in order by terror to restrain the enemies of liberty and thus assure the public welfare."

Marat reached London almost without resources, hoping perhaps once more to gain a living by the practice of medicine through the influence of those of his old patients who were surviving. The accustomed cry of the Paris hawkers, "*L'Ami du Peuple, L'Ami du Peuple de M. Marat,*" was heard no more. But not many days were over before the numerous political societies of the French capital began to feel the loss of their friend and adviser. The first sign of life the Parisians had from Marat was on the 3rd of March 1792, when the following letter was received by the president of the Cordeliers' Club :—

MR. PRESIDENT—I should to-day claim the engagement entered into by the friends of the rights of man, of propagating the principles of the "People's Friend," if I were in need of any other motive than their devotion of citizenship for making them concur with me to enlighten the people on their rights, to form a public spirit, to revive patriotism, and to make triumphant the cause of liberty. After fighting without relaxation for three consecutive years against reviving despotism, I have been forced to quit at last a career where I have found nothing but fatigue, difficulties, annoyances, misery, peril, sorrow, disgust, and in which I could do no more good to the People, but always less discouraged by the attempts of the enemies of the country than by the blindness and lukewarmness of her children. I have yet never abandoned their interests. I have only thought that it would be most usefully serving them to develop before their eyes the striking picture of the machinations of the cruel enemies sworn to their

destruction, of the crafty policy of the Constituent Assembly, and of the vices of the Constitution—vices which are the curse of France and which will be an eternal source of anarchy and civil dissension till they are corrected. After all the schemes of the Government for suppressing my writings, travestyng them, abusing their author, and representing him as sold to the enemies of the country, that which I propose to publish cannot produce all the good that is to be expected from it if the “patriots” of the departments have not the certitude that it issues from the pen of the true “People’s Friend.” The society over which you preside, sir, knows my principles and has declared itself their propagator. I expect from its zeal in public affairs that it will undertake to convey the prospectus of my work to all the patriot societies of the kingdom, engaging them to give it the greatest publicity possible. For my part, I shall use every means to place it within reach of the poorest citizen, designed as it is to put the People on its guard against unfaithful leaders, to disclose the traps of the rascals bribed to enchain it, to cause it to know what laws must be reformed and what laws must be passed, in order to ensure liberty and public happiness. Such a work will become the school of patriots. I pray you, sir, to lay my request before the society and to make known its decision to the citizen who brings you this letter. Receive my patriotic salutations.

MARAT, the “People’s Friend.”

This letter is dated “Paris, the 3rd of March 1792.” Whence we may conclude that Marat had already reached Paris by the first week in March. The news of the return of the “People’s Friend,” and of the prospects of his resuming his political activity, was, of course, greeted with

enthusiasm by the popular societies. The *Ecole du Citoyen*, as Marat's proposed work was to be entitled, was intended to form, as the prospectus stated, 2 vols. 8vo of about 400 pages each, and the subscription price was to be 6 livres 10 sols. (6f. 10c.) for Paris, and 7 livres 10 sols. (7f. 10c.) for the departments. With the issue of this prospectus appeared a formal invitation of the Patriotic Societies of the capital, asking the author to resume his pen, having, as they stated, felt, since the suspension of the journal entitled the *Ami du Peuple*, that the country had lost its most zealous defender. They suggest that steps should be taken to ensure the spread of the journal, so dreaded by the enemies of liberty throughout the provinces, at the lowest possible price. Subscriptions were to be sent to the secretaries of the provincial patriotic societies that were affiliated to the Jacobin Society of Paris.

Marat, when he secretly returned to France, had taken up his abode at No. 270 Rue St. Honoré, in an apartment rented by the three sisters Evrard. While there, although, as we have seen, immediately on his arrival he had taken steps to secure the assistance of the patriotic societies for the publication of his proposed new work, as well as for the reappearance of the *Ami du Peuple*, weeks went by and neither the *Ecole du Citoyen* nor the *Ami du Peuple* saw the light. Meanwhile Marat, not wishing to embarrass his hostesses, sought refuge with his friend Jacques

Roux. At last one of the sisters, named Simonne, resolved to devote her share of the family fortune to resuscitating the revolutionary organ. We may here mention that Marat, as would appear from the document given in the next chapter, was engaged to Simonne Evrard at the time of his departure for London. We merely mention Simonne here in passing, as we shall shortly return to the subject. With the money furnished by this devoted woman, the *Ami du Peuple* was now able to reappear. Up to this time, in spite of the good-will of the "patriots" of patriotic societies, want of means had made this impossible. On the 12th of April 1792, after a suspension of nearly four months, the wonted cry of the street-hawkers was again heard.

Within the last few months several things had happened. Lafayette had ceased to be the Commandant of the National Guard, an office which was now held in turn by the six generals of divisions. Bailly had been replaced as Mayor by Pétion since the 20th of November. Other changes had also taken place in the municipal administration. The leader of the emigrants, including the brothers of the King, had been declared accused. A foreign coalition, consisting of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, had been formed against France, and war loomed nearer every day. Bouillé was urging on the organisation and armament of the Royalist rebels, the emigrants. The Emperor Leopold II., however, died on the 1st of March, and Gustave III.

of Sweden, who was intended to be placed at the head of the French Emigrants, was assassinated on the 29th of the month. Finally, a ministry of strong Girondin proclivities had been for some weeks in power. The Girondin Roland now held the portfolio of the Interior, De Grave that of War, while Dumouriez was at the Foreign Office, Garnier was Minister of Justice, and Clavière of Finance. At the head of the new series of the *Ami du Peuple* appeared a resolution of the Cordeliers' Club, characterising the silence of Marat as a veritable public calamity, and beseeching him to take up his pen again at the earliest possible opportunity. Marat found that no less than four spurious *Amis* had been brought into existence during his absence, and great were the efforts made to assure the public of the authenticity of the present issue. About a week after the resumed publication, on the 20th of April, war was declared by the Cabinet, in reality against the European coalition, though nominally against Francis II., "King of Hungary and Bohemia." This measure was popular with all parties. The Court had well-grounded hopes of its turning to the advantage of Royalism, by the success of the allies over officers many of whom were in its direct service, and hence only too anxious to be defeated, and over a badly-organised army. It would, moreover, carry off vast numbers of "fighting patriots," who might prove dangerous at home. It also afforded an excuse for levying heavy taxes. The revolutionary parties, on the

other hand, hoped to gain from the enthusiasm which the war would engender in the name of liberty, of the country, etc. The Girondins were, to a man, hotly in favour of the war. A portion only of the extreme Jacobins, including, however, the most able leaders, were opposed thereto. Danton and Robespierre strongly attacked the war-policy from the tribune of the Jacobins' Club. Let us hear what Marat says on the subject. "The war, will it take place?" he asks, on the eve of the Cabinet's decision. "Everybody is for it. We are assured that it is the opinion that has prevailed in the Cabinet, after the representations of Sieur Mottier (Gilbert Mottier, Marquis de Lafayette), who without doubt has given it as the only way of distracting the nation from internal matters by occupying it with foreign affairs; making it drown home troubles in the news of the gazettes, wasting the national wealth in military preparations, crushing the State under the burden of taxes, killing the patriots of the army of the line and of the citizen army, leading them to slaughter under the pretext of defending the frontiers of the empire." Farther on he says, "If the war takes place, whatever may be the bravery of the defenders of liberty, one need not be an eagle to foresee that our armies will be overwhelmed in the first campaign. I imagine that the second will be less disastrous, and that the third may even be glorious, for it is impossible that we should not gain some instruction at our own

cost.” History testifies to the truth of this prophecy. According to Marat, the Assembly ought to have apostrophised the King somewhat as follows :—“ King of the French, it is in vain that you should conceal yourself in the follies of a tortuous policy in order to cover us with the disasters of war ! You will not escape from the avenging arm of the people ! We declare to you, in the name of the nation, that we will not treat with your colleagues, the princes of Europe, that we will not make any preparations for war ! Compromise or not with them, you are the master ! The care of recalling your rebellious brother and cousins concerns you, similarly that of turning aside your colleagues from all hostile enterprise. The frontiers of the State will remain open ; but be assured that at the authentic news of the first body of enemies that crosses them, your culpable head will roll at your feet, and your entire race will be extinguished in its blood ! ”

Marat's articles on the war are admitted even by his detractors to be statesmanlike and masterpieces of political journalism. The question of the war was the cause of the first open breach between the Girondins and what afterwards became the party of the Mountain—the more decided, more energetic revolutionists of the Paris sections and the Clubs. The Girondins, or the Brissotins, as they were still mostly called, now acquired, owing to their pose, the nickname of “ statesmen,” an epithet Marat is especially fond of bestowing



upon them. For the rest, the burden of Marat's preaching in the *Ami du Peuple*, after the outbreak of the war, was, if possible, a sharpening of the eternal vigilance he had preached from the beginning. Against one man particularly all "patriots" were to be on their guard, and that man was Mottier Lafayette.

At last the moderate parties, among whom we may now reckon the Girondins, were urged by their fears to attempt the forcible suppression of the "People's Friend," as in the old Lafayette-Bailly days. On the 4th of May the matter came before the Convention, in the form of a motion by the Girondin Lasource to the effect that the author of a certain article criticising the generals and sundry deputies should be prosecuted before the supreme National Court. As a counterblast to the *Ami du Peuple*, the Royalist party was now running a paper entitled *L'Ami du Roi*. The Girondin orators endeavoured to discredit Marat by pretending they were both the work of the same hand, or at least run with the same funds, with the object of discrediting the Revolution in the Royalist interests. The result was that the Assembly authorised proceedings simultaneously against both papers. Marat now resolved once more to resume his subterranean life. "They have launched against me a decree of accusation," he says (*Ami*, No. 650). "I am ready to appear against them before any equitable tribunal, but I will not deliver myself over to tyrants whose hired satellites have orders with-

out doubt to kill me while arresting me, or to imprison me in a dungeon. Let the Conscript Fathers who are persecuting me indict me before an English tribunal, and I pledge myself, the report of their *séance* in my hand, to have them condemned to the 'Petites-Maisons' as madmen, and I pledge myself, my writings in my hand, to have them convicted as odious oppressors. They are already covered with opprobrium, may they soon be the object of public execration !”

The pursuit of Marat was so hot that for a whole week it was impossible to publish the paper. The affair of the *Ami du Peuple* now divided with the war the attention of the Assembly. In order to discover Marat's retreat, a decree was passed ordering every inhabitant of the capital to make a declaration of any person, French or foreigner, residing with him. But it was all to no effect. Marat's person could not be seized. The utmost that was accomplished was to throw obstacles in the way of the production of the *Ami*, in consequence of which there were numerous gaps in the publication during the ensuing weeks. On the 12th of June, a deputy accused the Minister of Justice of not fulfilling his engagement to the Legislature, to take steps for the suppression of the obnoxious journal. He complained that it was still circulating as freely as ever. “I have four or five of the last numbers,” said he, “where Marat puts a price on the heads of generals, ministers, and members of the Assembly, whom he accuses of being in

league with the Court to destroy the battalions of volunteer patriots." But to suppress the *Ami du Peuple* entirely was easier to promise than to perform. Despair once more laid hold of the "People's Friend" himself, and led once more to his announcing his intention of retiring from political life—an intention which, as on a former occasion, was not carried out.

The Girondins now began to attack other leaders of the extreme Jacobin party personally, Robespierre being especially the butt of their invectives. The Girondin Guadet went so far as to accuse Robespierre of having inspired an article in the *Ami* to the effect that the crisis through which France was passing urgently called for a Dictatorship. He intimated that the suggestion was a bid for supreme power for Robespierre. To this accusation Marat thought it necessary to give an explicit and detailed denial. "I owe," says he, "a precise and categorical reply to citizens too little enlightened to see the absurdity of the statement. I declare, then, that my paper is not at Robespierre's disposal, although it has often served to do him justice; and I protest that I have never received a single note from him; that I have never had any relation, direct or indirect, with him; that I have never seen him but once all my life; yet that on that single occasion our conversation sufficed to bring to light ideas and to disclose sentiments diametrically opposed to those Guadet and his clique

attribute to me." The first word that Robespierre addressed to him related, he said, to the "sanguinary demands" for the blood of the enemies of liberty; these, Robespierre said, he was persuaded were only spoken "in the air" and were not seriously meant. Marat indignantly repudiated this view of Robespierre's, insisting that the value of his paper did not depend solely on methodical discussions on the political situation, but also on the fact that he allowed free vent to the feelings of his heart at the moment. He went on to insist that his indignation at the oppression of the legislators was equally real and its expression equally necessary. As to its being no mere rhetorical form, he assured Robespierre that, after the horrible affair of Nancy, he could have decimated the barbarous deputies who applauded it; that he would willingly have sent the infamous judges of the Châtelet to the stake; that again, after the massacre of the Champs de Mars, if he had but found two thousand men animated with the same sentiments as himself, he would have placed himself at their head, poniarded the General (Lafayette) in the midst of his brigand-battalions, burnt the despot in his palace, and strangled the traitorous representatives in their seats, as he had declared at the time.

"Robespierre listened to me with terror," he says; "he grew pale and was silent for some time. This interview confirmed me in the opinion that I always had of him, that he

unites the knowledge of a wise senator to the integrity of a thoroughly good man and the zeal of a true patriot ; but that he is lacking as a statesman alike as regards clearness of vision and determination." This is noteworthy as showing the extent to which Marat kept to himself. That he should have been for two years the great political force he was, and yet should have only once come into contact with that other growing force, the prominent leader of the Jacobin Club, the ex-member of the "Constituent," whose "incorruptibility" and whose "virtue" were already in every "patriotic" mouth, is at first sight scarcely credible ; yet so it was. Marat was emphatically the lone, lorn man of the Revolution, who, even if he had many admirers at a distance, had no intimate friends. Never seen at the fashionable salons, where other revolutionary leaders forgathered, associating with no one, he was understood by no one, and by most grievously misjudged.

From the 15th of June to the 7th of July the *Ami du Peuple* had to be suspended. In consequence of the complaint made in the Assembly, the Executive felt itself called upon to take vigorous action against the "People's Friend" and his paper. At the same time the Royalist print, the *Ami du Roi*, in the decree against which a show of impartiality was at first made, was allowed to go its way unmolested. A partial renewal of the Ministry by the King did not change matters one way or the other ;

nor did the sham revolt of the 20th of June, got up under the auspices of the Girondin leaders, the primary object of which was to demand the reinstatement of the dismissed ministers of their party. Marat was carefully concealed all this time, and from the non-appearance of the *Ami* the authorities doubtless cherished the hope that, although they had failed to seize Marat in person, they had at least succeeded in extinguishing him as a political entity. Their security, however, was dispelled by the reappearance of the paper on the 7th of July, though only ten numbers in all appeared during the ensuing month.

The memorable 10th of August found Marat still in close concealment. But before the day was over, while the cannon was still thundering at the Tuileries, and while the Swiss Guards, deserted and forgotten by their Royal master, were, with the stupidity of mechanical fidelity, uselessly letting themselves be slaughtered in the hopeless attempt to hold the Palace against the armed populace of Paris, supported by the enthusiasm of the Southerners, men were seen placarding the walls of the city with an exhortation from the pen of the dauntless "People's Friend," from which we extract the salient passages.

It is headed "The 'People's Friend' to French Patriots," and begins :—" My dear Compatriots, a man who made himself for a long time anathema for you escapes to-day from his

subterranean retreat to endeavour to assure victory to your hand. Eager to prove to you that he is not unworthy of your confidence, permit him to recall to you that he is still under the sword of tyranny for having unveiled to you the frightful machinations of your cruel enemies." The placard proceeds to show how all Marat's vaticinations had come true, how completely justified was his forecast of the war and his criticisms on the way it was being conducted. "The glorious day of the 10th of August 1792 may be decisive of the triumph of liberty, if you do but know how to profit by your advantage. A great number of the despot's satellites have eaten the dust, your implacable enemies are in consternation, but they will not be slow to return and reassert themselves in a more terrible form than before. . . . After having shed your blood to drag the country from the abyss, tremble lest you become the victims of their secret plots. . . . Dread the reaction, I repeat ; your enemies will not spare you when their chance comes ; therefore, no quarter ! You are lost without recovery if you do not hasten to strike down the corrupt members of the Municipality of the Department, all the anti-patriot judges, and the most putrid deputies of the National Assembly !" The placard then goes on to deprecate any sentimental respect for the said National Assembly, maintaining it to be utterly corrupt and at the service of the enemies of the people. "No one," says the

author, "abhors the shedding of blood more than myself, but to prevent its being made to flow in streams, I urge you to sacrifice a few drops. To reconcile the duties of humanity with the cares of public safety, I propose to you, then, to decimate the counter-revolutionary members in the Municipality, among the judges, in the Department, and in the National Assembly ; . . . but above all things, hold the King, his wife, and son as hostages, and until his definite judgment shall be pronounced, let him be shown four times a day to the people ! Moreover, since it depends upon him to rid us for ever of our enemies, declare to him that, if within fifteen days the Austrians and the Prussians are not removed twenty leagues from the frontier, never to return, his head shall roll at his feet." Marat had seen from the first that the war was mainly a dodge to introduce the King's friends, the allied powers, into France, with the object of crushing the Revolution and reinstating Louis as absolute monarch. Arrest of the ministers is advised and the holding of them in irons ; also the execution of all the counter-revolutionary officers of the National Guard, with the disarming of certain battalions known to be reactionary. The convocation of a National Convention was, for the first time, demanded in this placard, which concludes, "Last of all, make the Assembly put a price on the heads of your cruel oppressors, the fugitive Capets, traitors and rebels ! Tremble, tremble, lest you let a unique occasion escape



that the tutelary genius of France has created for you, that you may depart out of the abyss and assure your liberty !” The placard is signed “Marat, the ‘People’s Friend,’” and is dated “Paris, this 10th of August 1792 ; the printing-office of Marat.”

The next day, the 11th of August, Marat once more, and now for the last time, emerged from his cellar-retreat into the light of day. His subsequent political career as an active adviser of the new insurrectionary Commune of Paris, and later on as deputy for Paris to the National Convention, will form the subject of a future chapter. With the great day of the 10th of August the first period of the French Revolution comes to an end. Men formerly in opposition are now masters, the Court as an institution finally disappears. A new governmental body, the revolutionary Commune of Paris, manned by new men, the most advanced politicians of the “sections,” animated by new principles, not merely takes the place of the old Municipality, but absorbs into itself many of the powers previously exercised by Legislative and Executive, becoming indeed, for the time being, the embodiment of the Revolution, the great dictatorial power before which all France bends.

## CHAPTER VII

### MARAT AS LOVER AND HUSBAND

OF Marat's relations to women we know comparatively little, and much of the little that is recorded is fragmentary and uncertain. His old friend of pre-revolutionary days, Brissot, has naturally as little good to say of Marat, as Marat has of him. Before the 10th of August the "People's Friend" had devoted a whole number to an attack on Brissot, whom he accused, among other things, of being in the pay of the Royalists. In return Brissot devotes two or three chapters of the memoirs he wrote while in prison to his relations with his old friend, whom he does his best to depreciate by depicting him as a vain charlatan; but he includes a few facts and anecdotes that we may presume to have some basis in fact. Amongst others Brissot relates that Marat had spoken to him of his relations with the "celebrated Kaufmann," whose talent for music he praised as much as that for painting, and respecting whom "he related several interesting anecdotes to me that I have preserved."

and closeness of affection, coupled with fidelity, constitute marriage, Marat's relation to Simonne Evrard was that of as true a marriage as ever existed. That Marat's family regarded it as such is shown by a declaration made on the 22nd August 1793, the 2nd year of the Republic, and signed by two of Marat's sisters, Marianne, whose married name was Olivia, and Albertine Marat, and by his brother Jean-Pierre Marat. "Penetrated with admiration and gratitude for our *dear and worthy sister*," they say, "we declare that it is to her that the family of her *husband* owe his preservation during the last years of his life, and that without her he would have succumbed to neglect and misery. Since Marat's family were ignorant at that time of the state to which this unfortunate victim had been reduced, we declare further that we are not merely grateful to her for having devoted her fortune and her care to his preservation—for having heroically shared his perils, for having shielded him for a long time by her vigilance from the traps that the aristocrats spread for him, no less than from the opprobrium with which they sought to cover him—but still more, for having given back this indefatigable citizen to his worthy functions, for having preserved him as long as in her power lay for that People of which he was always the friend. We declare, then, that it is with satisfaction that *we fulfil the wishes of our brother in acknowledging the Citoyenne Evrard as our sister*; and that we shall hold as infamous

those of our family, should such be found, who do not participate in the sentiments of esteem and gratitude we feel towards her ; and further, if, contrary to our expectation, such exist, we ask that their name should be made known, as we do not wish to participate in their infamy." The Convention, to its credit it may be said, also recognised Simonne Evrard as Marat's widow.

Calumny has naturally not been idle, either as regards the noble-minded woman who for months carefully tended the "People's Friend" through the last stages of a distressing illness, or as to the private life of Marat himself. The malicious lies of that odious, but classical example of the female prig, Mme. Roland, the darling heroine of the conventional historian of the French Revolution, are almost too absurd to be worth noticing. The representation of Marat as a hideous ogre, conducting ladies by the hand into costly furnished apartments, with blue and white damask sofas, elegant draperies, superb porcelain vases, is too absurdly in contradiction with well-known facts to have been worth the making. Mme. Roland knew, however, that the exercise of ingenuity was not necessary for the defamation of Marat, since all the dishonest press lacqueys of privilege and power would always be against him, and hence no story calumniating him could be too preposterous to be greedily adopted by these gentlemen and retailed for the benefit of the ignorant. Mme. Roland, be it observed, took care to wait till

long after Marat's death before putting forward the slanders, professing to deal with events, which, had they really happened, she must have known months before, and which, had she known, she would assuredly have been the first to publish at the time when the battle between "Mountain" and "Gironde" was at its height. Other stories of Marat's gallantries are equally devoid of any vestige of proof or probability. Everything points to the fact that, during his Revolutionary period at least, that is, since his acquaintance with Simonne Evrard, Marat had no intimate relations with any other woman.

Simonne was born on the 6th of February 1764, and was therefore about twenty-six years of age when she made Marat's acquaintance, and began first of all to give him shelter. She is described as of a figure a little above the middle height, with brown hair and eyes, with a forehead of ordinary size, but rather a large mouth, chin well formed and rounded, aquiline nose and oval face. The following appreciations of her, whom, whatever her legal position may have been, we may justly call Marat's wife, by her contemporaries, made on the occasion of the unveiling of the bust of Marat after his death, are interesting as showing the estimation in which Simonne was held by Marat's political friends. A certain Jacobin, by name Alexandre Rousselin, observed in a speech, "It was in a cellar that gratitude gave birth to that virtuous love to which Marat was faithful. This

generous loved one, in saving him, declared herself a lover of her country, and was worthy indeed to be his inseparable companion. It is into the secret of so sweet an intimacy that it is necessary to penetrate in order to be convinced that Marat's lofty and noble nature was accessible to all the charm of honest affection. Such a noble nature could only cherish noble passions ; nothing impure or abject ever soiled that chaste enthusiasm. In giving himself as her reward, he has consecrated for our veneration the tender object of his noblest sentiments." This may be rhetorical and even high-flying in its style, like most other oratory of the period ; but it none the less shows the esteem in which the faithful companion of the " People's Friend " was regarded by contemporaries. On another occasion a patriot observed in his speech, " I should call, citizens, your vengeance down on the whole sex of women, if, besides your memory of the crime of one other (Charlotte Corday), you could not recall a Republican woman who saved Marat from the persecution of despots during three years, who consecrated to him her life, her fortune, her existence, and who by her virtues was indeed worthy to become his cherished companion." Yet again a typical man of the people, one of the Paris artillerymen, observed in a speech on a similar occasion : " Obligated to fly, did not the ' People's Friend ' then find a friend amongst the people ? A generous and affectionate woman welcomed and saved him.

An enthusiast of liberty, this woman had conceived a high idea of the virtues of Marat. A noble passion succeeded to sentiments of esteem, and engaged her heart in love for a man whose misfortune still further endeared him." Another Club orator adjures Simonne Evrard in the following words :—"Dear and worthy wife of the virtuous 'People's Friend,' cease to weep; he lives no more for thee, but we live for him, and our last grandchild, seeing in thee the worthy half of Marat, will become the support of her who knew how to preserve him so long." Unfortunately the conviction here expressed did not prove true, for poor Simonne died in poverty some thirty years later. These contemporary expressions of opinion anent Marat's wife are collated by Bougeart (vol. ii. pp. 242, 243). Of the domestic relations of Marat with his wife we know little, but the casual glimpse that we get would seem to clearly prove that, in spite of Marat's irritability, caused by disease and worry, supervening on a naturally vehement temper, a perfect harmony prevailed.

We have already referred to the stupid calumnies on the subject of Marat's private life, utterly devoid as they are of the thinnest plausibility; but while on the subject of his relations with women, we may as well give an example of a libel spread during his lifetime, hence one which happily he himself had the opportunity of blowing to atoms. Just before the election of the National Convention in September 1792,

Marat drew up a list from among the candidates of certain men whom, rightly or wrongly, he deemed suspect. Among them was a certain Deflais, who, on finding himself thus gibbeted, straightway drew up a document directed against Marat, which he placed before the electoral body. It alleges against Marat, among other things, that, after being sheltered and hospitably entertained during two years by a poor citizen, Maquet by name, he, Marat, having sent his host out of the house on a feigned mission, eloped with the latter's wife, carrying off the furniture. Marat's action was prompt in the matter, a placard being immediately issued, headed "Marat, the 'People's Friend,' to the electors, his fellow-citizens." The placard contains the accusation *in extenso*. It then goes on to prove that Maquet never had a wife; that he did, however, have a housekeeper, whose domestic service, according to Marat, he had exploited for several years, without salary, acknowledgment, or even thanks. On the contrary, as was alleged, he terrorised the woman, frequently beating her. Marat affirms that he more than once witnessed scenes of this description while lodging in the house as a paying boarder (not as a guest). Several articles of furniture, alleges Marat, admittedly belonged to this woman and had been brought into the house by her. On one occasion Maquet was away on his own business in Picardy for three weeks, without writing or sending any message home. The woman being in distress and not



knowing what to do, applied to Marat for advice. He gave her the best counsel in his power as how to obtain possession of her pieces of furniture and outstanding wages. All this happened just when Marat was about to depart for London. The woman, who was about thirty years of age, fearing to be left alone, asked Marat to find her a place as a nursery-governess. Maquet returning from his journey, discovering that she had made a confidant of the "People's Friend," and fearing lest she might go away with him, locked her up in a room, and did his best to betray Marat himself into the hands of Lafayette's spies. The "People's Friend," who by this time had left the house of Maquet, hearing of what had happened, publicly advised her in his paper to escape by the casement of the room where she was confined, and to complain to a magistrate of the treatment she had received. Maquet, in alarm, at once gave the woman a written authorisation to take away her furniture and leave, which she did. Marat further advised her to call in the Commissary of her section and demand her wages, but this she did not do, and consequently lost the money. He refers to back numbers of the *Ami du Peuple* for confirmation of the above statement, with the necessary documentary proofs. This complete exculpation naturally resulted in the utter discomfiture of M. Deflais, who thus appeared in the light either of a very credulous dupe of Maquet or of a wilful slanderer.

To sum up the relations of Marat with the other sex: setting aside the malignant fabrications of slander-mongers, clumsily concocted lies without a shred of foundation or even plausibility, we have given in the present chapter all the known facts and the statements which suggest themselves as having any probability to support them. These amount to the account of Brissot in his memoirs anent the painter Angelica Kaufmann; and his story, corroborated with fuller detail by his editor M. de Montrol, regarding the Marquise de l'Aubépine. Brissot, although an enemy of his former friend Marat, whom he throughout endeavours to paint with the colours of an envious conceited charlatan, nevertheless generally seems to have some basis of fact for his statements, however distorted they may be, and therefore merits more respect than Mme. Roland, Barbaroux, or Henriquez, whose silly concoctions, designed to calumniate a dead man, are an insult to historical intelligence. That Marat received shelter, among other hospitable roofs, in the house of Mdle. Fleury, an actress of the *Comédie française*, at an early period of his Revolutionary career, in 1789, while he was being persecuted by Lafayette, is undoubtedly true, but there is no evidence of any other than a "patriotic" relation in this friendship and hospitality. Apart, then, from the two cases given, which refer to the pre-revolutionary period of Marat's life, we may fairly assume that the only woman with

whom Marat had relations of a serious or enduring character was his unwedded wife Simonne Evrard, subsequently recognised by friends, relations, and even the Convention itself as his widow. It is as certain as negative evidence can make it, that during nearly the whole of his Revolutionary period, *i.e.* from the end of 1789 to the middle of 1793, when he was assassinated, Simonne Evrard, who had given up her fortune, herself, her all, for the "People's Friend" and the cause he championed, was the only close female companion he had. This is the woman, of good education and even of means, whom the lying Carlyle, after exhausting all his literary powers to pander to class-hatred by heaping opprobrium upon the "People's Friend" himself, meanly seeks to render contemptible by styling a "washerwoman" !

## CHAPTER VIII

### MARAT AS ADVISER TO THE FIRST PARIS COMMUNE, AND DEPUTY OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

WE have seen Marat emerge from his cellar on the day after the Revolutionary crisis, *i.e.* on the 11th of August. The Revolution had suddenly taken a leap forward; the Legislative Assembly and the reinstated Girondin Ministry represented the Government of France, but Paris on the eve of the momentous day formed a momentous resolution. The Sections, the Patriotic Societies, all that was politically revolutionary in the capital, were determined to take a decisive step. But to take this step it was necessary that Revolutionary Paris should have its organ: the old Municipal Council of Paris, with all that belonged to it, was hopelessly, and even aggressively, reactionary. The Municipality therefore offered itself for attack. Accordingly, on the night of the 9th to the 10th of August, the old occupants of the Hôtel de Ville were driven out or killed, and delegates of Revolutionary Paris

were installed in the Municipal headquarters. The Jacobins and the Cordeliers were now masters. It is this new body, ostensibly municipal, but really national in its work, to which accrued the task of tiding France over a period of six weeks which elapsed between the overthrow of the monarchy on the 10th of August and the opening of the National Convention on the 20th of September. It was the new governing power—the old governing power, the Ministry and the Assembly being now looked upon as weak and unsatisfactory. The one man who redeemed this effete ministry from incapacity was the Revolutionary giant Danton. Danton was now officially Minister of Justice; unofficially he was the executive itself, as Mr. Belloc has justly observed (*Danton, a Study*, p. 172). Marat, on appearing once again in the upper daylight of Paris, was almost immediately invited to assist the new governing body with his advice, and, as we are told, he had a special tribune assigned to him. The journal, however, did not appear for the next two days. In the meantime Marat had been granted the right to seize the old royal printing plant of the now defunct *Châtelet*. The first number of the *Ami* after the 10th, dated the 13th, treats of the proposed election of a National Convention—a measure which, as we have seen, Marat had been among the first to urge. He claimed for the new Assembly direct election, the exclusion of all those who had held any privileged post and of

the members of the existing Legislature from the right of candidature. Marat's great political object was now the close watching of the action of the effete Assembly, which he regarded as the main source of danger. It was above all things hostile to the new Commune. Hence the constant denunciation on the part of the "People's Friend." "You, worthy compatriots of the Sections of Paris, true representatives of the people, beware of the snares that these perfidious deputies lay for you ; beware of their honeyed expressions ; it is to your enlightened and courageous citizenship that the capital owes in part the success of her inhabitants and the country will owe her triumph" (*Ami*, No. 678). In No. 679 we have the following advice : "Guard the King from view, put a price on the heads of the fugitive Capets, arm all the citizens, form a camp near Paris, press forward the sale of the goods of the 'emigrants,' and recompense the unfortunates who have taken part in the conquest of the Tuileries, invite the troops of the line to name their officers, guard the provisions, do not miss a word of this last advice, press the judgment of the traitors imprisoned in the Abbaye ; . . . if the sword of justice do at last but strike conspirators and prevaricators, we shall no longer hear popular executions spoken of, cruel resource which the law of necessity can alone commend to a people reduced to despair, but which the voluntary sleep of the laws always justifies." Here we have an application

of Marat's Rousseauite principles, which was destined to bear fruit a fortnight later, in the September massacres. But Marat was by no means alone in this view. Danton at the same moment was urging from the tribune the necessity of the prompt appointment of a court to try traitors, as the only alternative to the popular justice of the streets.

Marat was now assiduous in his attendance at the Commune, although never formally a member. For a whole month his public activity here and elsewhere prevented him from finding time for the issue of more than four numbers of the *Ami du Peuple*. In one of these (No. 680), bearing date the 17th of August, he denounces vigorously the action of the Legislature, in postponing the trial of the Royalist conspirators of the 10th of August, whose numbers were daily increasing in the prisons. The Commune, doubtless acting on the advice of Marat, seconded his endeavours by sending three deputations to the Assembly, the last of which pointed out, that if the court were not formed in a few days, something serious would happen in Paris. The Assembly did not hurry the matter forward, and the something serious was, as history tells, what came to pass. That the September massacres were directly the result of the efforts of the Moderate party to screen men who were openly plotting the overthrow of the Revolution is plain enough. The Moderatist and Girondist Assembly hesitated at making a few examples of

even the most notorious of these plotters. The crisis in the war, long foreseen by Marat and others, was now becoming more acute every day. On the east, the Germans were at the very frontier of France, which lay practically open before them. The peasant insurrection in the west in La Vendée, the aim of which was to restore Royalism and the *Ancien Régime* generally, had already begun. Between this Scylla and Charybdis lay Paris, the monarchy overthrown indeed, but the city crowded with monarchists, whose one aim in life now was to re-establish the King in his old functions, even with the aid of foreign bayonets. These conspirators were openly rejoicing in the misfortunes of France, boasting what they would do when the foreign troops had entered Paris and when the King had received his own again and had bestowed upon them the hoped-for reward for their treachery to the Revolution. Brunswick had issued his insolent manifesto to the French nation. Lafayette had fled across the frontier, and been declared *hors de la loi*. Both he and Delon were known to be in communication with the enemy, with the view to assisting their march on Paris. News had arrived of the fall of Longwy, that was, of the only obstacle to the march of the victorious allies on Paris. The Ministry was considering the propriety of leaving Paris, which they regarded as hopelessly lost. This would undoubtedly have been carried out, had it not been for the crushing opposition of Danton. The



Commune and the Sections of Paris, between them, had established a *Comité de Surveillance*, with power to add to its numbers. Into this committee Marat was co-opted.

Meanwhile the Commune's activity and Danton's in the arrest of suspected persons had been untiring within the last few days. The prisons were now full; but the Committee, of which Marat was the most influential member, took the step of withdrawing from the prisons those of whose guilt, in its opinion, there was any reasonable doubt. Marat and the rest saw what was coming; the last straw to break the patience of Paris was the acquittal on Friday the 31st of August of Montmarin, the late Governor of Fontainebleau. Montmarin was notoriously and openly a courtier, who wished to see the allies in Paris, and his royal master reinstated, and who was proved, beyond the shadow of a doubt, to have been actively engaged in plotting to this end; yet, incredible as it may seem, on being brought to trial, this man was acquitted, and, as if to lend emphasis to the acquittal, the judge himself, descending from the bench, gave him his arm as he walked out of court. This was, of course, a put-up job of the executive authorities. An unsuccessful attempt was even made to deprive the Commune of its powers. The criminal Girondin Ministry had at last forced the crisis. Forty-eight hours later, the notorious September massacres began. Danton, himself, in disgust at the conduct of his ministerial colleagues,

turned aside, and devoted himself to enrolling volunteers on the Champs de Mars to resist the tide of invasion, and, with his "daring, again daring, and ever daring," he was succeeding. Volunteers were indeed rolling up on all hands; but one sentiment was heard among these volunteers also on all hands. "We will go to the front," said they, "but we will not leave enemies behind us!" This sentiment is the key to the acquiescence of all Paris in the popular executions which ensued.

And now as to the part played by Marat in these events. That he did not, with one exception, which we shall notice presently, instigate the massacres directly is perfectly clear. The Sections of Paris had begun to act of themselves. Marat and his Committee of Supervision at most took the control of the movement which had already begun spontaneously. . . . But did Marat try to prevent the massacres? Did he express disapproval of them? To the first question it must be answered that to prevent or to dam the powerful movement which had now seized the whole of Revolutionary Paris was beyond the power of any man. Roland, Minister of the Interior, could not have done it; even Danton, the Minister of Justice, could not have done it. These functionaries would simply have been disregarded, had they issued orders to the Sections to hold their hand. But it may be said that Marat was more powerful for the moment with the Parisian populace than

any official organ of the State ; this is in a sense true, but his power lay in his being the focus and embodiment of the dominant Revolutionary feeling carried to its logical conclusion. Marat, like any one else, had he opposed this feeling, this popular instinct of self-preservation, would have once and for ever lost his influence. To the second question we must answer with a decided negative. Under all the circumstances which we have given in a few words, Marat did not, and could not, without being false to his own principles, disapprove of the idea of justice being meted out by the people themselves to acknowledged traitors, now that governmental justice had by its acts refused to deal with the matter. At the same time, we should emphasise that Marat is only directly responsible for the popular action at one of the prisons, namely, that at the Abbaye. Here is what he says on the subject (*Ami*, No. 680) : " What is the duty of the people ? The last thing it has to do, and the safest and wisest, is to present itself in arms before the Abbaye, snatch out the traitors, especially the Swiss officers and their accomplices, and put them to the sword. What folly to wish to give them a trial ! It is all done : you have taken them in arms against the country, you have massacred the soldiers, why would you spare their officers, incomparably more culpable ? The folly is to have listened to the smooth-talkers, who counselled to make of them only prisoners of war. They are traitors

whom it is necessary to sacrifice immediately, since they can never be considered in any other light."

The facts as regards the September massacres are familiar to every reader of history. The mysterious band of from two to three hundred Sansculottes, the long dishevelled hair, the red caps, the pikes! How this band passed from prison to prison during the days and nights of the 2nd to the 4th of September, accomplishing its terrible work of wild justice; the improvised tribunal, the gaunt figure of Maillard, the stormer of the Bastille, and his assessors, trying prisoners by candle-light in the vaults and cellars of the ancient buildings, now being used as houses of detention,—all this is familiar not merely in history, but in romance and drama as well. Verdun was known to be on the eve of falling, and as a matter of fact had fallen on the day previously, and while the so-called massacres were taking place, the tocsin was ringing out the call to the defence of the country, and the volunteers were willing to go, provided the lives of those they left behind them were ensured against the traitors of the capital. Such was the position of affairs, and all Paris knew it, on the day that the massacres began. That Marat's committee, the Committee of Supervision, which had been appointed by the Commune, and specially charged with the duty of dealing with conspiracies and conspirators, though it did not originate, did to some

extent direct, and hence make itself responsible for, the spontaneously arisen movement, may be regarded as certain. But even at the present day, when so much has been unearthed on the subject of the Revolution, we know next to nothing of the details of the affair. Our only direct evidence is confined to two documents. The first is a circular or rescript, issued by the Committee of Supervision, or Committee of Public Safety, as it was also called (which must not, however, be confounded with the great Committee of Government of that name, instituted by the Convention six months later). This Committee, established, as we have seen, by the Commune of Paris, undoubtedly dominated the latter body at the time of which we are writing, acting, in fact, as a kind of executive committee of the Commune ; it sat at the Hôtel de Ville, and its members consisted of Marat, Panis (the secretary of Danton), Sergent, Duplais, Lenfant, Jourdeuil, Deforgues, Leclerc, Deuffort, and Cally. The rescript in question, which was on the official paper of the Ministry of Justice, was sent in the official envelopes of the same department throughout the provinces, and runs as follows :—" Brothers and friends, a frightful plot has been set on foot by the Court to kill all the patriots of the French empire—a plot in which a large number of Members of the National Assembly are compromised. On the 19th of last month, the Commune of Paris having been reduced to the cruel necessity of

seizing again the power of the people to save the nation, it has neglected nothing to merit well of the country, as to which an honourable testimony has been given to this effect by the Assembly itself. Who would have thought it ! since then new plots not less atrocious have been set on foot in silence ; they came to light at the same moment that the National Assembly, forgetting that it had declared that the Commune of Paris had saved the country, was hastening to deprive it of its power as a reward for its burning patriotism. At this news, the public clamour raised on all sides made the National Assembly feel the urgent necessity of uniting itself to the people, and of returning to the Commune, by the withdrawal of the decree of dissolution, the powers with which it had invested it. . . . The Commune of Paris hastens to inform its brothers of all departments that a party of ferocious conspirators detained in its prisons has been put to death by the people. These acts of justice have seemed to the people indispensable, in order, by terror, to restrain the legions of traitors hidden within its walls, at the moment when it was about to march on the enemy. Without doubt the entire nation, after the long series of treasons which has brought it to the brink of the abyss, will hasten to adopt a measure so necessary for the public safety, and all Frenchmen will cry with the Parisians : ‘ We will march on the enemy ; but we will not leave behind us these brigands, to murder our children

and our wives.' Brothers and friends, we ourselves expect that a party among you will fly to our aid and assist us to repulse the innumerable satellites of the despot sworn to the destruction of the French nation. Let us join hands in saving the country, and to us will be the glory of having rescued it from the abyss."

This document was signed by all the members of the Committee, and bears date "Paris, the 3rd of September 1792." It clearly proves that the signatories to it had no wish to shirk responsibility for the events of the 2nd and 3rd.

The other document referred to is an exculpatory article in No. 12 of Marat's *Journal de la République*, occasioned by the virulent attacks of the Girondins in the Convention on the Commune, the Committee of Supervision, and above all on Marat himself, with reference to the massacres :—

"The disastrous events of the 2nd and 3rd of September, which perfidious and venal persons attribute to the Municipality, has been solely promoted by the denial of justice on the part of the Criminal tribunal which whitewashed the conspirator Montmarin, by the protection thus proclaimed to all others conspirators, and by the indignation of the people, fearing to find itself the slave of all the traitors who have for so long caused its misfortunes and its disasters. They call those brigands who massacred the traitors and scoundrels confined in the prisons. If that were so, Pétion would be criminal for having

peaceably left brigands to perpetrate their crimes during two consecutive days in all the prisons of Paris. His culpable inaction would be the most serious crime, and he would merit the loss of his head for not having mobilised his whole armed force to oppose them. He will doubtless tell you, in order to exculpate himself, that the armed force would not have obeyed him, and that all Paris was involved, which is indeed a fact. Let us agree, then, that it is an imposture to make brigands responsible for an operation unhappily only too necessary. It is then because the conspirators have escaped the sword of justice that they have fallen under the axe of the people. Is it necessary to say more to refute the dishonest insinuation, which would make the Committee of Supervision of the Commune responsible for these popular executions? But its justification does not end there. We shall see what the principal members of this Committee have done to prevent any innocent person, any debtor, any one culpable of a trivial offence, being involved in the dangers which threatened great criminals. I was at the Committee of Supervision, when the announcement was made that the people had just seized from the hands of the Guard, and put to death, several refractory priests, accused of plotting, destined by the Committee for La Force, and that the people threatened to enter the prisons. At this news, Panis and myself exclaimed together, as if by inspiration, 'Save the small delinquents, the poor debtors, those



accused of trivial assaults !' The Committee immediately ordered the different jailers to separate these from the serious malefactors and the counter-revolutionary traitors, lest the people should be exposed to the risk of sacrificing some innocent persons. The separation was already made when the prisons were forced, but the precaution was unnecessary, owing to the care taken by the judges appointed by the people, who exercised the functions of tribunes during the expedition, to inquire into each case and to release all those whom the Committee of Supervision had separated. This is a discrimination the despot would certainly not have exercised had he triumphed on the 10th of August. Such are the facts which oppose themselves to the calumny that has distorted the narrative of the events of the 2nd and 3rd of September."

The foregoing article is given *in extenso* in this place, owing to the interest attached to this much-debated question, and as tending to show how spontaneous was the action of the Parisian populace on the days in question. The hypocrisy or bad faith of the Girondins, in using the September massacres as a weapon with which to attack Marat, is shown by a speech made on the evening of the 3rd of September by Roland, the Minister of the Interior, in the Assembly. "Yesterday was a day over the events of which it is necessary perhaps to draw a veil. I know that the people, terrible in its vengeance, nevertheless carries with it a kind of justice. It does

not take as its victim the first who presents himself to its fury, but it directs the latter upon those whom it believes to have been a long time spared by the sword of the law, and who the peril of the situation persuades it ought to be sacrificed without delay." This speech is reported in the *Moniteur* for the 5th of September. It must be acknowledged that the above utterance expresses little else than Marat's own position in cautious and chosen language. As a matter of fact, no one who has impartially studied the question can for a moment be in doubt that the summary executions of conspirators, outside of the prisons of Paris, on the 2nd and 3rd of September 1792, saved the Revolution and saved France from being crushed and enslaved by the European coalition ; saved France from the wholesale butchery of all holding progressive views, which had been many times threatened by the reactionary press, and which was more than hinted at in Brunswick's manifesto. The number of persons killed in the massacre is usually estimated at 1089, though other statements make it 969 ; putting it at the highest figure, it can hardly in any case have reached 1200. It was an application of Marat's principle of striking 500 guilty heads to save 5000 innocent ones. But who were these, at most a thousand odd, "victims" of popular justice ? On this point hinges nine-tenths of the horror which the September massacres have excited. They were the noble and the wealthy, and the

hangers-on of the noble and the wealthy ; most if not all of them had been, directly or indirectly, conspiring to reinstate the deposed King with the aid of an invading army ; prepared avowedly not merely to destroy the newly-won liberty, but to take the lives of all who advocated popular freedom and who deprecated a return to the old oppression and corruption. Such as these it was for whom it has been the endeavour of prejudiced historians to excite the sympathy of subsequent generations.

From the Paris of 1792 to the Paris of 1871 is a far cry, but let us compare notes. In the Paris of 1871 there were also massacres, not of a thousand odd, but of a number variously estimated at from twenty to thirty thousand. Here in the enormous majority of cases there was not even the semblance of a trial. In the latter case there was no imminent danger, no army marching on Paris, no plotters inside the city in collusion with that army, but a movement that had been hopelessly crushed. This last-named massacre had not been preceded by newspaper articles, however truculent, or by threats merely, but by the systematic butchery of prisoners of war for a month previously, on the part of the perpetrators of it. Of Marat, as we have seen, it can at most be said that he approved up to a certain point, and endeavoured to control an act which we have no evidence that he directly organised. But who was the official organising personality of the massacre with which we are

comparing it? Louis Adolphe Thiers, who made a boast, for weeks before, of the vengeance he was preparing for Paris, and who, when compromise was proposed to the effect that the Government should enter Paris, and not the army, replied, that though it should cost a river of blood, the army should enter first; and yet Louis Adolphe Thiers has never been regarded by "the world" otherwise than as an honourable statesman, whose acts might perhaps be open to criticism, but scarcely to severe censure, let alone to virulent denunciation, such as has been accorded to Jean-Paul Marat for his share in the affair of September 1792. We have seen to what class the victims of 1792 belonged. The thousand odd victims were almost wholly well-to-do hangers-on of the Court. But who were the twenty or thirty thousand victims of 1871? Almost wholly workmen, partisans of a cause avowedly hostile to wealth and privilege, and therefore hated by wealth and privilege. Herein lies the ground of the divergence in the world's judgment of the two events. If the "world" would only be candid in the matter, and avow openly that it likes well-to-do Royalist plotters and dislikes Proletarian insurgents, we should know where we were, and the issue would at least be clear. But the canting hypocrisy of him who pretends *on moral grounds* to denounce Marat and his colleagues, without denouncing Thiers and the scoundrels who carried out *his* policy, in terms a hundred-fold as severe, convicts himself

of being a conscious humbug, upon whom argument would be wasted.

The enemy without and the enemy within now alike had been successfully combated, the leading spirit being, as we have seen, in the one case Danton, and in the other Marat. A few days after Danton's enrolments and the September massacres, the ragged, ill-equipped, raw levies of the Revolution were on their way to the front. The same levies a fortnight later drove the Prussian army back over the frontier in the great cannonade at Valmy on the 20th of September. The volunteers went boldly forward, once they were convinced that they were not leaving traitors behind to endanger the lives of their families. Meanwhile preparations were being made for the elections for the new National Convention.

On the 11th of September, the nomination of Marat was announced as one of the group of Parisian candidates for the forthcoming Legislative body. In vain the Girondins, headed by the Minister of the Interior, Roland himself, threw every obstacle in the way, by means of abuse and otherwise. In vain Roland, on the 13th, issued an address detailing all the offences of which Marat had been guilty—how he had abused the existing Parliament, excited to revolt, denounced ministers and all in authority as traitors, and other things of a like nature. In vain Roland's wife, in conjunction with other members of the Girondist party, organised paid agents to tear

down Marat's election-addresses. Marat's candidature was confirmed, and his triumphant election duly followed, he being returned fifth on the Paris list. And now the *Ami du Peuple*, which since, as for some weeks before the 10th of August, though for different reasons, had only appeared sporadically, definitively ceased to exist, its place being taken by a new publication, entitled *Journal de la République française, par Marat, l'Ami du Peuple, député à la Convention nationale*, with a new motto, *Ut redeat miseria, abeat fortuna superbis* (That misery may be relieved, let the fortune of the wealthiest be reduced). The Girondins, having failed to prevent Marat's election, now resolved to leave no stone unturned to destroy his political influence abroad, by stifling him in the newly-elected body. The party-constitution of the National Convention was as follows. The Girondin party, which now occupied the extreme right, was returned in considerable force by certain of the departments, besides that of the Gironde, whence it took its name. Over against the Girondins, constituting the left, was what was afterwards called the Mountain, from the position it occupied on the upper benches in the great Salle de Manège, where the Convention at first held its sittings. It was mainly composed of the members for Paris, the Parisian Deputation, as it was termed, and it was identical in tone and policy with the popular clubs of Paris, especially the Jacobin Club, of which those composing it

were all members. Between these two parties were the Moderates, the so-called party of the "Plain," or, as they were termed in derision, "Frogs of the marsh." They did not formally side with either Gironde or Mountain, but professed to keep open minds, and vote on every question as it arose, unshackled by the fetters of party spirit. Their open-mindedness showed itself in the main, as the result proved, by the safe plan of voting for the party which was for the moment in the ascendant. The bulk of them were at heart constitutional bourgeois; but, as stated, they were willing to become the tools of every dominant influence by turn. At first they supported the Girondins, who continued in power under the Convention. This was probably their most genuine attitude so far as the majority of them were concerned, but later on fear led the very same men to support the Mountain against the Girondins, and to sanction by their acquiescence, if not by their active support, every procedure of the dominant man or section of the Mountain in turn. Their chief speaker for the first six months was Barrère, who subsequently became reporter to the Committee of Public Safety. The "Plain" formed by far the most numerous party, if such it can be called, in the Convention, that of the Mountain being the smallest.

The Convention was constituted on the 20th of September, in the great Salle of the Tuileries, subsequently adjourning to the Riding School.

Marat's colleagues in the Paris Deputation were Robespierre, Danton, Collot d'Herbois, Manuel, Billaud - Varenne, Camille Desmoulins, Lavi-comterie, the butcher Legendre, Raffron du Trouillet, Panis, Sergent, Robert, Dussault, Fréron, Beauvais de Préau, the dramatist Fabre d'Eglantine, Osselin, Augustin Robespierre (the younger brother of Maximilien), the painter David, Boucher, Laignelot, Thomas, and Philippe de Bourbon (Duke of Orleans), who now called himself Philippe Egalité. The first sitting was held the following day. It was short, and the principal work done was the formal abolition of Royalty and declaration of the Republic. The sitting of Wednesday the 25th of September was the occasion chosen by the Girondins for their first attack on Marat. It arose on a discussion respecting a decree as to the formation of a body-guard for the defence of the National Convention. The deputy Merlin stated that there had been talk of certain men perverse enough to advocate a triumvirate or dictatorship, and challenged the Girondin Lasource, whom he stated had made the assertion, to name those to whom he referred. This was the first conflict between the two parties. Lasource took up the challenge, and in a long speech alleged having heard remarks to the effect that two-thirds of the Convention were unworthy of the confidence of the people, also of threats of Parisian Jacobins to poniard certain Girondin deputies, himself included. On this he based his opinion that it



was very necessary to have a Guard, composed of men of the departments, to protect the majority of the Assembly against the ferocious populace of Paris. He ended by a plain denunciation of the Mountain. Barbaroux rose and denounced the party of Robespierre by name. Danton then made a speech, attacking Marat for his excesses, and stating his belief that his cellar-life had "ulcerated his soul"; he deprecated, however, denouncing the whole of the Paris Deputation on the ground of the injudicious conduct of one of its members. Other deputies having taken part, Robespierre made a long speech, listened to with great impatience, designed to exculpate himself of the charge of factiousness, and of desiring dictatorship for himself or others. The Marseillais Girardin, Barbaroux, reiterated the accusation against Robespierre, and urging the necessity of the departmental guard for the Convention, accused Panis of having proposed Robespierre for a dictatorship. Panis rose to explain, vehemently denying the accusation of Barbaroux, and justifying his own action and that of the Committee of Supervision.

Finally, Marat demanded to be heard. Thereupon a violent tumult arose with threatening cries. At this moment Marat seemed to be completely isolated, for his colleagues of the Paris Deputation were by no means indisposed to take the hint thrown out by Danton, and send him into the wilderness as the scapegoat, on the ground of his vehemence and injudicious

utterances prejudicing the whole party of the Left, alike in the Convention and in the country. Amid gesticulating Moderates of all shades, Marat mounted the tribune, and in the face of deafening cries, boldly read out an article in the final number of the *Ami du Peuple*, in which the "People's Friend" declares that all his efforts to save the people would seem to be useless without a fresh insurrection. "When I look at the stamp of the majority of the deputies to the National Convention," says he, "I despair of the public safety. If in the first eight sittings the complete basis of the Constitution is not laid, expect nothing more from your representatives. You are crushed for ever. Fifty years of anarchy await you, and you will not be relieved from it except by a dictator, a true patriot and statesman. Oh people of talkers," he concludes, "if you only knew how to act!" The few words of this article which Marat could cause to be heard in the general commotion were sufficient to raise a tempest. The whole Convention was thrown into confusion, the Girondins shouting "To the guillotine!" till their throats were hoarse. Amid the general hubbub, a proposition for a decree of accusation against the speaker was understood to have been made. Marat, however, strong in the sense of his honesty, clung to the tribune. Finally Lacroix, on the ground that it was essential that the Convention should have all the light possible on the question before it, obtained a

grudging silence for Marat. "Gentlemen," began Marat, "I have in this Assembly a great number of personal enemies." At these words there was renewed tumult, three-quarters of the deputies composing the Convention again rising from their seats, yelling, amid violent gesticulations, "All of us ! All of us !" Marat calmly waited till there was a lull, when he repeated, "I have in this Assembly a great number of personal enemies. I recall them to modesty. It is not by clamours, menaces, and outrages that you prove an accused man to be guilty ; it is not in shouting down a defender of the people that you show him to be a criminal. I return thanks to the hidden hand that has thrown in the midst of you an idle phantom to frighten timid men, dividing good citizens and making odious the Parisian Deputation. I return thanks to my persecutors for having furnished me with an opportunity of opening my mind fully. They accuse certain members of the Paris Deputation of aspiring to the dictatorship, to the triumvirate, to the tribunate. This absurd accusation is only able to find partisans because I form part of this deputation. Well ! gentlemen, I owe it to justice to declare that my colleagues, notably Danton and Robespierre, have constantly repudiated all idea of dictatorship, of triumvirate, or of tribunate, when I put it before them ; I have myself broken many lances with them on this subject." Marat goes on to remark that he was the first, and probably the only man since the opening

of the Revolution, who had openly declared for a triumvirate or dictatorship, as the only means of crushing conspirators. If the opinion is reprehensible, he alone is culpable, and upon him alone should vengeance fall. But at least let him be heard before he is condemned. These objectionable opinions had been printed and freely circulated for three years, and it is now for the first time they are discovered to be so criminal. He has never made any secret of these opinions, but always proclaimed them alike from cellar and from house-top. He goes on to justify them in reviewing the political conditions since the fall of the Bastille. Coming to the accusation of personal ambition, he points out the wealth he might have had from the Court and others, had he been prepared to sell his silence, let alone his pen. In what condition is he now? His appearance is enough to show that during the last three years he had sacrificed health, rest, means, in short, all that makes life worth living. As Mr. Morse Stephens justly observes (*French Revolution*, vol. ii. p. 163), "Jean-Paul Marat who came to sit on the benches of the Convention was a very different man from the Dr. Marat, possessed of a good fortune and a high reputation in scientific circles, the Court physician and the friend of great ladies, who had hailed with joy the convocation of the States-General; and in his slovenly dress and diseased frame could hardly be perceived the former sprucely-attired ladies' doctor. Only

three years had passed since the establishment of the *Ami du Peuple*, yet a mighty change had been wrought in Marat's appearance." "In order to better serve the country, I have braved misery, danger, suffering," exclaims Marat; "I have been pursued every day by legions of assassins; during three years I have been condemned to a subterranean life; I have pleaded the cause of liberty with my head on the block!" Marat concludes with an exhortation to the Convention not to consume precious time in these scandalous discussions, but to begin at once laying the foundation of the Constitution, of just and free government, which will assure the welfare of the people, "for whom," says he, "I am prepared at any instant to give my life."

His courage and sincerity, his generosity in boldly taking upon himself the responsibility for an opinion to the utterance of which crowds of deputies were clamouring for the death-penalty to be attached, were not without their effect on the impressionable audience. Murmurs of approbation began to be heard, but were speedily cut short by Vergniaud returning to the charge on ascending the tribune, declaring that he occupied it unwillingly after a man who had several unpurged criminal writs out against him. This remark, which obviously referred to the old mandates of the Châtelet in the Lafayette days, was not discreet on the part of Vergniaud, for sympathy was immediately evoked for the victim of the old

tyrannous régime. Finding his sally did not have happy results, Vergniaud tried something else and read over the address already given (pp. 207-9) to the departments, issued by the Committee of Supervision on the September massacres. At this there were some cries of "To the Abbaye!" from different sides. Marat once more rises with the greatest coolness, begging the Assembly not to give itself over to an excess of madness. A deputy demands that he should be interpolated purely and simply to avow or disavow the document in question. Continuing, Marat denies the necessity of an interpolation; the old decrees which had been launched against him, at the instance of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies respectively, had been quashed, said he, by the people themselves in electing him to the Convention; for the rest, he finds his glory and not his shame in them; they were issued against him by the friends of traitors because he had denounced traitors and the enemies of the people. He goes on to demand that the leading articles in the first number of his *Journal de la République* should be read. This is done by one of the official secretaries present. Marat flatters himself that, having heard this formal expression of his views, the Convention will no longer be in doubt as to the purity of his intentions. As for a retraction of the letter to the departments, and of his principles, no power on earth would be capable of forcing him to this; he can answer

for the purity of his heart, but he cannot change his ideas. "Your fury is unworthy of free men, but I fear nothing under the sun"; and at this moment drawing a pistol from his pocket and placing the muzzle to his forehead, Marat declares, "If a decree of accusation had been launched against me, I would have blown my brains out at the foot of this tribune." This was the result of three years of cellar-life, persecution, and misery. A decree was demanded, forsooth, against those who proposed a dictatorship, triumvirate, or a tribunate—a measure which in the last resort depends upon the people itself, and which, if deemed necessary by the people, will be carried out in spite of the decrees of that or any other Assembly. In voting a law against the sovereign rights of the people, the Convention would only compromise its authority fruitlessly. He concludes by demanding that the Convention should pass to the order of the day pure and simple. The speech, which had been greeted throughout its course with the expression of varied emotions from the Convention itself, but at times with vehement applause from the public galleries, was received with a perfect ovation at its close. Tallien, the Mountain deputy, supporting Marat's motion for the order of the day pure and simple, it was carried amid prolonged applause. Thus terminated in Marat's favour the first pitched battle between him and the Girondists. The manly and courageous attitude of the part played by Marat contrasts favour-

ably with the meanness of the conduct pursued by Danton and Robespierre, in deserting the man who for three years past had championed them through thick and thin, alike against their monarchist enemies and their Girondist opponents. However, in his account of the affair in his journal, we find not a trace of bitterness on the part of the "People's Friend." The action of Danton and Robespierre is described in a few absolutely impartial lines, without a word or suggestion of reproach, and this from the man who is described by his enemies as a coagulated mass of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness.

Here, perhaps, is the most suitable place to give the description of Marat by one of his colleagues in the Paris Deputation of the National Convention, Danton's friend, the dramatist, Fabre d'Eglantine. We can well imagine it to represent him as he lived and spoke at the memorable *séance* on the 25th of September we have just been describing. Marat, writes Fabre d'Eglantine, "was of short stature, scarcely five feet high. He was nevertheless of a firm, thick-set figure, without being stout. The shoulders and bust were broad, the lower part of the body thin, thighs short and wide, the legs bowed, strong arms, which he employed with much vigour and grace. Upon a rather short neck he carried a head of a very pronounced character; he had a large and bony face, aquiline nose, flat and slightly depressed,



the under part of the nose prominent; the mouth medium-sized and curled at one corner by a frequent contraction; the lips were thin, the forehead large, the eyes of a yellowish grey colour, *spirituel*, animated, piercing, clear, naturally soft and even gracious, and with a confident look; the eyebrows thin, the complexion thick and skin withered, chin unshaven, the hair brown and neglected. He was accustomed to walk with head erect, straight and thrown back, with a measured tread which kept time with the movement of his hips. His ordinary carriage was with his two arms firmly crossed upon his chest. In speaking in society he always appeared much agitated, and almost invariably ended the expression of a sentiment by a movement of his foot, which he thrust rapidly forward, stamping with it at the same time on the ground, and then rising on tiptoe, as though to lift his short stature to the height of his opinion. The tone of his voice was thin, sonorous, slightly hoarse, and of a ringing quality. A defect of the tongue rendered it difficult for him to pronounce clearly the letters *c* and *l*, to which he was accustomed to give the sound of *g* [in French]. There was no other perceptible peculiarity, excepting a rather heavy mode of utterance; but the beauty of his thought, the fulness of his eloquence, the simplicity of his elocution, and the point of his speeches absolutely effaced this maxillary heaviness. At the tribune, if he rose without obstacle or excitement, he

stood with assurance and dignity, his right hand upon his hip, his left arm extended upon the desk in front of him, his head thrown back, turned towards his audience at three-quarters, and a little inclined towards his right shoulder. If, on the contrary, he had to vanquish at the tribune the shrieking of chicanery and bad faith, or the despotism of the president, he awaited the re-establishment of order with quietness, and resuming his speech with firmness, he adopted a bold attitude, his arms crossed diagonally upon his breast, his figure bent towards the left. His physiognomy and his look at such times acquired an almost sardonic character, which was not belied by the cynicism of his speech. He dressed in a careless manner ; indeed, his negligence in this particular announced a complete neglect of the conventionalities of custom and of taste, and, one might almost say, gave him an air of uncleanness."

On leaving the Salle de Manège at the close of the sitting on the 25th, Marat was acclaimed by a large crowd, who followed him to his house. If Marat was generous to Danton and his friends of the Mountain, in spite of their shabby treatment of him on this occasion, he took care not to let his Girondin opponents off without exposing the real object of their machinations. "Let friends of the country know," he writes (*Journal de la République*, No. 5), "that, on the 25th of this month, the Guadet-Brissot faction had plotted to cause me

to perish by the sword of tyranny or the poniard of brigands. If I fall beneath the stroke of assassins, these friends will hold the clue for tracing the deed to its source." Once again, one of those marvellous intuitions of Marat which look so much like prophecy !

Foiled as were the "Brissot-faction" on this occasion, their hatred and their fear of Marat caused them to continue their intrigues unabated. Foremost among them in the bitterness of his attacks was Barbaroux, Marat's old pupil in the days of his physical researches. This young dandy, so much admired by Carlyle, with certain of his colleagues, among whom was Rebecqui, the same who subsequently killed himself on hearing of the destruction of his party, drew up and signed a large placard denouncing Marat. To this Marat replied (*Journal*, No. 15) : "In spite of their insults, I know none of these gentlemen personally, not even Rebecqui, whose gall is so bitter. I have had certain private relations with Barbaroux, at a time when he was not tormented with the rage for playing a rôle. He was a good young man who used to like studying with me." The Girondins were the more incensed by Marat at this time throwing suspicion on the officers of the army, especially upon their favourite General, Dumouriez. In doing this just now Marat risked his popularity even among the "patriots," as the victories of Valmy and Mainz had made the Generals concerned, and especially

Dumouriez, for the nonce popular heroes. Marat's keen insight and ready suspicion already discovered the traitor even in the subsequent conqueror of Jemmapes. Marat saw the latter with most of his staff in close alliance with his arch-enemies, the Girondins, who were still at the helm of affairs. In the course of October Dumouriez returned to Paris, to be fêted by all parties, not excepting the Jacobins and the Mountain, as the saviour of the nation. Custine had hurled the invasion back over the Rhine, following on Dumouriez's action in the Argonne in September. All hopes were therefore still concentrated in Dumouriez for clearing the situation in Brabant. The popular General arrived in Paris on the 12th of October. The social functions instituted in his honour culminated in a grand fête given by the actor Talma and his wife at their house in the Rue Chanteraine on the 16th of October.

Now it so happened that a little before this time an official report had reached the Convention from Dumouriez, respecting two battalions of Parisian volunteers, who, he alleged, had murdered four Prussian deserters, who had come to serve in their ranks, at a place called Ratel. The Girondins, always ready to make the most of anything to discredit Paris, affected great indignation, and induced the majority of the Convention to pass a resolution supporting the order made by Dumouriez for the inculpated battalions to be interned in a fortress pending an

investigation into the affair. Meanwhile no details of the incident were to hand. Now Marat, partly from information which had leaked out and partly from his natural scent for treachery, was convinced that the four alleged deserters were in reality spies in Prussian interest, and that the battalions were fully justified in summarily dealing with them. So the "People's Friend," who cared for neither personalities nor social functions, thought it would be an excellent opportunity to beard Dumouriez and challenge him to an explanation of the affair in the brilliant salon of the famous pillar of Parisian high-life. It should be said that Marat had already been to the Ministry of War and taken all the other steps necessary to obtain a complete version of the facts without success. Accordingly, accompanied by two Jacobin friends, Marat presented himself on the evening in question at Talma's house. Santerre, the Commandant of the armed force of Paris, who was acting as gentleman-usher on the occasion, announced his arrival in a loud voice. On entering he could see that most of the lights of Girondism were present. Pressing through the crowd of modish toilettes, he stepped up to the guest of the evening. "We are members of the National Convention," said he, "and we come, sir, to beg you to give us some explanation relative to the affair of the two battalions, the Mauconseil and the Republican, accused by you of having murdered four Prussian deserters in

cold blood. We have searched the offices of the Military Committee and those of the War Department; we cannot there find the least proof of the crime, and nobody can furnish information on the subject but yourself." "I sent all the documents to the Minister," replied Dumouriez. "We assure you, sir, that we have in our hands a memoir made in his offices and in his name, stating that he lacked absolutely facts to pronounce on this pretended crime, and that we must apply to you to get them." "But, gentlemen, I have informed the Convention, and I refer you to it." "Allow us, sir, to observe to you that the information given is not enough, since the Committee of the Convention, to which this affair has been referred, have declared in their report that they were unable to decide, for want of information and proofs of the alleged crime. We beg you to say whether you know all the circumstances of the affair." "But, gentlemen, when I assert a thing I think I ought to be believed." "We have, sir, great reason to doubt; several members of the Military Committee have informed us that these four pretended Prussian deserters are four French emigrants." "Well, gentlemen, if that were the case?" "That, sir, would absolutely change the state of the matter, and without approving beforehand the conduct of the battalions, we maintain that possibly they are innocent." "What, sir, would you then approve of the insubordination of soldiers?" "No, sir, but I

detest the tyranny of officers ; and the manner in which you have treated them is revolting." Here Dumouriez, feeling too hotly pressed, to get out of the embarrassment left them, observing as he went, "M. Marat, you are too warm, I cannot enter into explanations with you" (*Journal*, No. 27).

A striking scene this for a genre painter ! The brilliantly lighted ballroom, the fashionably-attired company, the shabby, uncouth figure of the "People's Friend," pressing up with his two Jacobin companions to the great man in uniform, seizing him by the coat sleeve as he attempts to turn on his heel with an arrogant retort at the intruder ! The visit had its effect, for, it is stated, a gloom fell upon the assembly after Marat's departure, all fearing the penetration and the power of the "Keeper of the People's conscience," as Marat had by this time come to be called. Dumouriez, especially, doubtless felt uncomfortable in the capital, for he left the following day for the front. But, nevertheless, within the next few weeks a still higher pinnacle of popularity was in store for him, for on the 5th of the following month Jemmapes was fought, and the Austrians driven back. The popularity was, however, short-lived, for it was soon followed by a general conviction of his treachery. The defeat of Neerwinden preluded the desertion of Dumouriez and his disappearance from history, which took place less than five months after the crowning victory which had

opened up the Netherlands to the Revolutionary armies of France.

Two days after the incident at Talma's another violent scene occurred in the Convention, caused by Marat's return to the charge respecting the two battalions, accusing the Minister of War of suppressing documents, and reiterating his charges against Dumouriez and Chabot, on whose denunciation Dumouriez had acted. Marat alleged the existence of a plot among the Generals to get rid of the patriot battalions as an obstacle to their schemes. In the course of his remarks a scene arose between Marat and a Moderate deputy named Rouyer, who had uttered threats against him. But these scenes in the Convention, in which the man who owed most obligations to Marat, his old pupil Barbaroux, almost invariably took a leading part in the attack on his old master and friend, were now well-nigh of daily occurrence, and to refer to them in detail would be monotonous and purposeless. Marat's frankness and open-heartedness often gave his enemies a handle by which to attack him. After a conclusive speech, the logic and force of which had made some impression on the Assembly, he would by an incautious observation set the wavering section of the Convention against him. He laboured under the misfortune of being no diplomat. What he thought and felt at the moment he uttered as freely at the tribune of the Convention as he wrote it in his journal. Fabre d'Eglantine observes (*Portrait de Marat*)



that "these scenes many times repeated had taught the enemies of the country, his adversaries, how to lay their traps for him. More than once they have abused his overflowing and impetuous frankness, to forge their arms against him, and by careful preparation of the circumstances to make his truthfulness a crime." Thus it was that the Girondins and their allies would often allow Marat to occupy the tribune when they would prevent other members of the Mountain from doing so. But it was not in the Convention alone, nor was it by tricks of debate or calumny merely, that the war was waged. Already, before Charlotte Corday was heard of, attempts were made by his implacable enemies on the life of the "People's Friend." More than once it was only thanks to the presence of Jacobin defenders that he was not murderously assaulted. A placard advocating his assassination was posted on the walls of the Palais Royal, but this the Commune ordered to be torn down, and those arrested who should attempt to replace it.

The personality of Marat was now, in fact, the burning question in Paris. There were even loyal Revolutionists, like Anacharsis Clootz, who, in his pamphlet *Ni Roland ni Marat*, took up the position that all discussion as to the merits of leaders ought to be sunk before the great ideals of liberty and solidarity which it was the task of Revolutionary France to realise for the human race. Not that Clootz was in the least hostile

to Marat. He merely failed to see that it was not Marat himself who thrust his personality into the foreground of political life, but his enemies, who by their attacks and ceaseless calumnies obliged him to be continually defending himself. The "People's Friend" had indeed at one time suspected this honest and single-minded enthusiast, owing to his being a Prussian nobleman, but he afterwards acknowledged his mistake, and shook hands with the generous-hearted "orator of the human race," calling him a *bon enfant*. Meanwhile, during these last weeks of the year 1792, the fury of the Girondins and their supporters, men of order as they professed themselves to be, developed into the worst kind of rowdyism. Bands of the provincial soldiery, dragoons and Marseillais, in Girondist pay, paraded the streets of Paris, in a more or less drunken condition, singing an anti-Jacobin song, with the refrain :

La tête de Marat, Robespierre et Danton,  
Et de tous ceux qui les défendront.  
O gué !

They would stop under Marat's windows, threatening to set fire to the house where he was living. So great was the danger at one time, that Marat was compelled to suspend the publication of his journal for some days. In the Chamber the Girondins, having apparently abandoned for the nonce the tactics spoken of by Fabre d'Eglantine, of exciting Marat to

injudicious utterances in the heat of debate, and then using them to excite the feeling of the Convention against him, seemed to have resumed the policy of refusing him a hearing, since on the 26th of November Marat writes, "I am obliged to refrain from mounting the tribune to explain my views, because, however good they might be, it would suffice that they came from me to ensure their rejection." He further observes that he must, under the circumstances, confine himself to appearing on important occasions, in order to unmask and render abortive the nefarious plots of the "criminal faction," namely, the Girondins, and to "defend the rights of the people."

The following extract from the minutes of the sitting of the Jacobins' Club, on Sunday the 23rd of December, will show how completely isolated Marat was at this time, even within the Mountain itself. *Robert*.—"It is very astonishing that the names of Marat and Robespierre are always coupled together. Marat is a patriot; he has excellent qualities, I admit, but how different is he from Robespierre! The latter is discreet, moderate in his means, whereas Marat is exaggerated, and has not that discretion which characterises Robespierre. It is not sufficient to be a patriot: in order to serve the people usefully it is necessary to be reserved in the means of execution, and most assuredly Robespierre surpasses Marat in the means of execution," etc. *Bourdon*.—"We ought long since to have

acquainted the affiliated societies with our opinions of Marat. How could they ever connect Robespierre and Marat together? Robespierre is a truly virtuous man, with whom we have no fault to find from the commencement of the Revolution. Robespierre is moderate in his means, whereas Marat is a violent writer, who does great harm to the Jacobins (murmurs); and besides, it is right to observe that Marat does us great injury with the National Convention. The deputies imagine that we are partisans of Marat, we are called Maratists; if we show that we duly appreciate Marat, then you will see the deputies draw nearer to the Mountain where we sit, you will see the affiliated societies which have gone astray rally around the cradle of liberty. If Marat is a patriot he will accede to the motion I am going to make; Marat ought to sacrifice himself to the cause of liberty. I move that his name be erased from the list of members of this society." This motion excited some applause, violent murmurs in part of the hall, and vehement agitation in the tribunes. *Dufourny*.—"I oppose the motion for expelling Marat from the society (vehement applause). I will not deny the difference that exists between Marat and Robespierre. These two writers, who may resemble one another in patriotism, have very striking differences. They have both served the cause of the people, but in different ways. Robespierre has defended the true principles with method, with firmness, and with

all becoming discretion ; Marat, on the contrary, has frequently passed the bounds of sound reason and prudence. Still, though admitting the difference that exists between Marat and Robespierre, I am not in favour of the erasure. It is possible to be just without being ungrateful to Marat—he has been useful to us, he has served the Revolution with courage (vehement applause from the society and the galleries). There would be ingratitude in striking him out of the list (‘ Yes, yes,’ from all quarters). I conclude with proposing that the motion of Bourdon be rejected, and that merely a letter be written to the affiliated societies to acquaint them with the difference that we make between Marat and Robespierre” (applause). This motion was in the end adopted.

As an instance of this debatable Jacobin’s influence with the people, I may cite, on the other hand, another incident of a different kind. “ It is some days now since I was addressed by some Marseillais (who did not evidently follow their compatriots in the devious paths of Girondism) with the words : ‘ Marat, your party increases every day—we belong to it.’ I replied : ‘ Comrades, I have no party, I do not wish any ; only be happy and free, that is all I desire ’ ” (*Journal de la République*, No. 89).

Marat’s good-humoured generosity towards the man who was foremost among his persecutors, Barbaroux, is worthy of notice. “ Young man,” he writes (*Journal*, No. 33), “ you are too young

for your heart to be thoroughly bad. I prefer to believe that you are misled by some evil passion. A day will come when you will blush at the baseness of the part you are playing with regard to me. Who would believe that it is only three months ago since, despairing at the way things were going and believing liberty to be lost, I had an interview with Barbaroux, who then called himself my disciple, and boasted of having shown himself a little Marat at Marseilles? I possess a letter of this period, that any one may come and verify who likes, which concludes thus : ‘My friend, I am incapable of breaking my word to you ; to-morrow, the day after, perhaps later still, I shall visit the person who has always accompanied me to your house. I shall then communicate to you all my observations and all my views ; but whether I am right or wrong, the error or the correctness of my judgment will never influence my heart ; I shall always remain at once your friend and your companion in misfortune.’ ”

It was the man who wrote these words a few months before who was now foremost in seeking not merely the political extinction of his old friend, but his very life.

The time for the trial of the King, Louis Capet, at the bar of the Convention was now rapidly approaching, and the importance of the issue naturally overshadowed the acrimonious hatred of the Girondins and their backers, against Marat and the Mountain, for the time being.

The various questions which arose relating to this occupied several numbers of the *Journal de la République*. The Girondins, notwithstanding their swelling periods on the subject of tyrants and tyranny, with references to Cato, Brutus, and the rest of the classical exemplars, fearing now the people of Paris much more than the King, were anxious to save Louis as far as might be. That he should be acquitted was hardly to be thought of in face of the events of the 10th of August, and became altogether out of the question on the documentary proof of his machinations with the enemy, contained in the secret press of the Tuileries, coming to light. But they were willing to postpone matters, and, at least, save the King's head. The question having been raised as to the legality of the nation's trying the King, whom the Constitution of 1790 had declared inviolable, Marat has some observations in his *Journal* (No. 65) which display equally his lawyer-like capacity of pulverising an argument of this kind and his common-sense. After the usual reference to the Rousseauite doctrine of the Social Contract, as to the delegation of public function by the nation to this or that person for the common weal, and the people's right to withdraw their mandate the moment they felt the common weal to be threatened by its continuance, he points out that, even admitting the binding validity of the Constitution in question, the contention as to inviolability was absurd. "The Constitution,"

says he, "declares the person of the King inviolable and sacred. But this inviolability can only refer to the legal acts of Royalty. It only meant the privilege of not being personally responsible for the choice of means of putting the laws into execution. One would hardly go so far as to say that in rendering Louis Capet inviolable, the Legislature wished to confer on him the privilege of conspiring without danger for the ruin of the country, and to secure him the means of achieving it with impunity, by letting him thus enjoy peaceably the fruit of his crimes. And supposing the Legislature had had the design, would it have had the right? You, gentlemen, whom the nation has commissioned to replace this perfidious Constitution by wise laws, you will not participate in the revolting vices of such a shameful monument of slavery in judging the despot. It is by the unwritten Law of Nations that you will judge him."

This article of Marat's effectually silenced the inviolability argument, which even without it could hardly have imposed upon any reasonable person. It was decided that the trial should take place, and Malesherbes, having expressed his willingness, was named as Louis' defender. The actual speech for the defence was made by Desèze. The trial was to be before the National Convention, and the verdict by simple majority, each member to respond to the question of "Guilty or Not Guilty," on his name being called. Many sittings of the Con-



treacheries and so much public disaster, the bulk of the party were prepared up to the very last to risk civil war, and that too when the enemy, beaten back for a moment, was already preparing to renew his invasion on three sides. The Girondin proposal to submit the matter as a referendum to the primary assemblies, as Marat pointed out, could mean nothing less than civil war.

We will not linger over the oft-repeated story of the trial and execution of Louis XVI. Suffice it to say that, when called upon to give his vote, on the occasion of the memorable sitting, Marat did so in the following terms:—"In the firm conviction that Louis is the principal author of the crimes which caused the blood of the 10th of August to flow, and of all the massacres which have stained France since the Revolution, I vote for the death of the tyrant within the twenty-four hours." At the same time that Marat voted in the majority for death without respite, believing the crimes of Louis to merit the last penalty, and its infliction to be necessary for the safety of France and the Revolution, he could show not only fairness, but even pity for the condemned. The following day he writes in the *Journal de la République* (No. 95): "He behaved at the bar with decency. How great would he have been in my eyes in his humiliation had he but been innocent!" Whatever we may think as to the King having been urged to his acts of treachery

and cruelty by persons, of stronger character than himself, who surrounded him, we must not forget that these acts were done in his name and with his consent, even where they were not effected by his express orders. The failure of the Gironde and its Moderate supporters to save the life of the King was the first distinct sign of the waning of their influence. It was the first decided victory of the ideas and policy of the Mountain in the Convention. The next day Kersaint, the Girondin, gave in his resignation, on the ground that he would no longer sit in an Assembly where Marat could carry the day against Pétion. During the trial the "People's Friend" received numerous letters from Royalists, offering him money if he would but say one word in favour of the accused. One letter alone offered him as much as a hundred thousand crowns. Marat's only reply was, "I belong to the people, I shall never belong to any other party; that is my profession of faith."

The last act performed in unison by all the parties in the Convention was the attendance at the funeral of Lepelletier St. Fargeau, who was assassinated in a café by a Royalist, as one of those who had voted "death" on the evening of the King's condemnation. In this ceremony singular unanimity was displayed, deputies of various shades—Marat among them—making speeches on the occasion. This over, the battle was renewed in the Salle de Manège with unabated fury.

As for Marat, satisfied with the victory of his party in the matter of the King's trial, and hoping that the momentary unanimity shown at Lepelletier's funeral might prove the beginning of a reconciliation of the parties on a working basis, he adopted a more conciliatory tone in his *Journal*, but to no effect. The event soon proved that he was wrong—that, as he expressed it, “these men cannot change their heart as the serpent can his skin.” “Hence,” says he, “there is no longer any question of living in peace with them, but rather of declaring an eternal war.” Before beginning it, he devoted the number of his *Journal* (109) in which he makes the above statement to exculpating himself from the more plausible accusations brought against him. Marat at this time practically held the majority of the forty-eight Paris Sections in the hollow of his hand. Even within the Convention, deputies were accused by the Girondins of being Maratists—a term of reproach invented by them, but which, as the wont of such sobriquets, soon became an honourable designation among the Paris Sections. The Moderates seemed now to have definitely organised disturbances, spiced with cries of “To the Abbaye! To the bar! To the guillotine!” whenever the “People's Friend” mounted the tribune to oppose some reactionary measure or to urge some necessary reform.

Having failed to carry a decree of accusation against Marat on the ground of advocating a

dictatorship, the Girondists sought about for other pretexts. They had charged him, without success, of endeavouring to stir up the troops to insubordination. Finally, an incident occurred which afforded them the desired opportunity. The bread-famine in Paris had been for weeks past increasing in intensity. Long files, composed mostly of half-starved-looking women, were to be seen daily at certain hours outside the bakers' shops, awaiting their turn to be supplied with bad bread at an exorbitant price. On the 24th of February, Chaumette, Procureur of the Commune, made a report on the subject of the want of means of subsistence in Paris before the Council-General. He demanded an immediate advance of four millions to cope with the situation. The Council decided to refer the matter to the Convention. On the report being read, the Girondins, with the hatred of Paris ever in their hearts, objected to this necessary subvention as a special favour shown to one town. On the morning of the next day, the 25th, an article appeared in Marat's *Journal* on the famine, in which occurred the following passage:—"In every country where the rights of the people is not an empty phrase, ostentatiously recorded on paper, the sacking of a few shops, at the doors of which the 'forestallers' were hanged, would soon put a stop to those malversations which are driving five millions of men to despair, and causing thousands to perish of want! Will the deputies of the people do nothing more than prate about

their sufferings, and never propose any remedy to relieve them?" This advice, it is needless to say, was only the practical application of the Rousseauite thesis so clearly expounded by Marat in his *Plan de Constitution* and *Plan de Législation criminel*, the two works which, as already said, formed the theoretical basis of all Marat's political action. In the latter work mentioned, Marat had, twelve years before, categorically laid down the thesis that, "in a world full of the possessions of others, where the indigent have nothing to call their own, they are obviously reduced to perish of hunger. Now, since they derive nothing but disadvantage from society, are they obliged to respect its laws? Doubtless, no! If society abandons them, they re-enter the state of nature, and when they reclaim by force those rights which they could only alienate in order to ensure for themselves greater advantages, all authority that opposes them is tyrannical, and the judge who condemns them to death is no better than a cowardly assassin."

This was just what the Girondins wanted. It mattered not that bread riots had occurred some days before this was written; it sufficed that, on the afternoon and evening of that day, a general pillaging of provision shops went on in the streets of more than one quarter of Paris. Here was proof positive that Marat had not merely incited to unlawful acts, but successfully incited to them, this notwithstanding that Marat's chief point, the making of an example of a few of the

“forestallers,” *i.e.* of those who were buying up the available supply of bread and selling at exorbitant prices, was not acted upon. The following day, the 26th, a deputation appeared before the Convention, to protest against the riotous scenes of the previous day. Barrère, who led the debate ensuing, spoke of all the trouble as the work of ultra-patriots, hinted at a particularly mischievous ultra-patriot; but did not venture to mention names. The Girondin Sallis then rose. “I come to denounce to you,” said he, “one of the instigators of these troubles,—it is Marat.” He then read the article containing the passage about the “forestallers.” No sooner had he concluded than it seemed as though the whole Assembly rose in indignation. Marat rushed to the tribune, and repeated in substance what he had written the previous day in his *Journal*. “It is incontestable,” he said, “that the capitalists, agents, and monopolisers are nearly all supporters of the *Ancien Régime*. As I see no chance of changing their hearts, I see nothing that can give tranquillity to the State but the total destruction of this accursed conspiracy. To-day it redoubles its energies to distress the people by the exorbitant price of bread, the first necessary of life. Since there is no law to punish monopolisers, the people has a right to take justice into its own hands.” However dreadful it may sound when enunciated by Marat, this is a principle practically adopted under all circumstances where ordinary

law is ineffective, but usually in the interest of the "rights of property," rather than against their abuse. It should be remembered too, by those who shudder at the words of Marat, that at this very period, and for long afterwards, the common law of England caused dozens of human beings to be hanged every week for trivial offences, such as stealing a loaf of bread; and yet the supporters of these laws are not execrated as monsters, but are, at most, mildly censured as having been unnecessarily severe in their views of justice. Marat, on the other hand, because under extraordinary circumstances he thought an exceptional example necessary from among those who were reducing the people of Paris to starvation, is by these hypocrites denounced as a sanguinary demagogue.

On the conclusion of his speech, Buzot moved that "M. Marat be decreed accused." "The law is precise," he said, "but M. Marat quibbles about its expressions; the jury will be embarrassed how to act, and we have no wish to give M. Marat a triumph in the very face of justice." Several propositions were then made, a resolution being ultimately passed that all the instigators of the riots should be, without distinction, cited before the ordinary tribunals. "Good!" exclaimed Marat; "then pass an act of accusation against myself, that the Convention may prove it is devoid of all shame." It was finally declared adopted, amid great excitement, that the case should be referred to the ordinary tribunals;

though the executive power knew better, in the excited state of public feeling, than to proceed further in the matter. Had they done so, they could not well have succeeded, for not only was there no law against the expression of an opinion, whatever might be the indirect consequences supposed to flow from it, but the liberty of the press, which the Revolution had won, definitely guaranteed the right to free discussion of public matters. The next two numbers of the *Journal de la République* are devoted by Marat to a defence of his views and a further discussion of the origin of the famine. "The cause of this scourge which distresses us," writes Marat, "lies in the enormous mass of *assignats* (paper money), the value of which necessarily diminishes with its multiplication, both in a legal way and by forgery. Now diminution of value unfailingly carries with it an augmentation of the price of provisions. These have already reached an exorbitant figure, soon they will become so dear that it will really be impossible for the poorer classes to acquire them, and these constitute two-thirds of the nation. You may expect therefore to see the most frightful disorders, and perhaps the overturning of all government, for a famished people knows no laws, save the primary law of seeking the means of living. I have foreseen these disorders for three years, and have done all I could to oppose the system of *assignats*, above all of *assignats* of small value." The only effectual means of averting the crisis,



Marat declared, was his old proposal to extinguish the public debt, paying the creditors of the State with national bonds, to be issued on the guarantee of the ecclesiastical and other property which had been nationalised. The emission of a vast mass of small paper money had proved, as he predicted, a suicidal proceeding. He goes on to show that his own proposal would have obviated all the evil results from which they were then suffering. In another number Marat points out that the confiscation of the Church property, one of the functions of which had been to relieve necessitous persons, had increased the general misery. "The property of the Church," says Marat, "was the patrimony of the poor; in depriving them of this resource, the Constituent Assembly exposed them to die of hunger. On confiscation, the Church property ought to have been divided into three portions: the first to be used for the payment of priests' salaries; the second sold, so as to form a sinking fund to pay off Government debts; the third portion, Church lands, should have been divided in small lots amongst the peasantry."

Meanwhile the unstable "men of the Plain," the centre party of the Convention, were becoming gradually detached from their loyalty to the "right," the Governmental party of the Girondins. The vacillation and want of statesmanship of the latter in the conduct of affairs had led to deep distrust on the part of those

outside their immediate party, who at first had been disposed to take them at their own valuation. Marat wrote an eloquent appeal to the "Plain" in his *Journal* on the 2nd of March; he pointed out that the dictates of humanity, pity, and philanthropy were as dear to him as to them, but that to exercise them towards traitors and conspirators, in a moment of imminent public danger, was nothing less than a crime. "Indulgence to these criminals is barbarity to the people. We must crush them or we shall be crushed by them."

Early in March the *Journal de la République* ceased to exist, owing to a resolution, on a motion by Lacroix, in effect forbidding deputies to carry on simultaneously with their legislative functions the occupation of journalist. In consequence of this decree, Marat, on the 14th of March, changed the title of his paper to that of *Publiciste de la République française, ou Observations aux Français, par Marat, l'Ami du Peuple, député à la Convention!* No one could, of course, object to a deputy merely publishing his observations to his constituents.

But the wiles of reaction were not yet exhausted. What seems to have been a dexterously-conceived trap for the Mountain, and especially Marat, was laid on the 12th of March. A section of volunteers presented themselves at the bar of the Convention, demanding a decree of accusation against Dumouriez and his *Etat-Major*; this at a time when, whatever the char-

acter and ultimate intentions of Dumouriez were, he was just entering Holland to effect an important diversion by which to relieve French troops and out-manœuvre the enemy. Another article in the petition demanded the heads of Gensonné, Vergniaud, and Guadet. Marat was fully equal to the occasion. In commenting on the object of the deputation, he observed, "I have already exposed these atrocious plots, the political *liaisons* of Dumouriez, his relations with the Court ; nevertheless I regard him as intimately bound up with the public safety since the 10th of August, and more particularly since the head of the tyrant has fallen beneath the sword of the law. He is bound to us by the success of his arms, and I appear in this tribune to combat this insensate motion, as well as to raise my voice against perfidy towards a General. If the proposition were adopted, it would be equivalent to opening our doors to the enemy." Then passing on to another part of the petition, "I demand that the petitioners read the article of their petition, in which they desire the heads of Gensonné, Vergniaud, and Guadet [the Girondist deputies]—an atrocious crime tending to the dissolution of the Convention and the loss of the country (unanimous applause). I have already raised my voice against these assassins. I have been to the popular society of the Cordeliers, and have there preached, and confounded these orators led on by the aristocracy." Marat, in fact, saw in the deputation simply *agents provoca-*

*teurs* of the Girondist party, and in the proposition a trap.

About a fortnight later news arrived of the defeat at Neerwinden and of the defection of Dumouriez, after arresting Camus and three other commissioners sent by the Convention. This came on the top of a manifesto from the General threatening to hand them over to the enemy, and, to crown all, to march on Paris, to annihilate the Mountain and dissolve the Convention, in the ostensible interests of Girondism. Accordingly a manifesto was issued by Marat. "Friends, we are betrayed," he writes. "To arms! To arms! The hour has come when the defenders of the country must either conquer or bury themselves beneath the ashes of the Republic. Frenchmen, never was your liberty in greater peril! Our enemies have now put the finishing stroke to their perfidies, and to consummate them, Dumouriez and his accomplices are about to march upon Paris. The manifest treason of the Generals in league with him has never admitted of a doubt, no more than that the plan of rebellion, inspired by his insolent boldness, is directed by the criminal faction, which has, until the decisive moment, maintained him, and which has deceived us as to his conduct. The menaces, the defeats, the plots of this traitor—his villainy in placing under arrest four commissioners of the Convention, which he would have attempted to dissolve—are sufficiently well known. But, brothers and friends,

your greatest dangers are in the midst of you. It is in the Senate that parricidal hands would tear out your vitals ! Yes, the counter-revolution is in the Government, in the National Convention ! But already indignation inflames your courageous citizenship. Come then, Republicans, let us arm ! Let us all rise and arrest the enemies of our Revolution ! Let us exterminate without pity all the conspirators, if we would not be exterminated ourselves ! Such delegates are either traitors or Royalists, or incapable men. The Republic repudiates the friends of kings ! It is they who partition her, who ruin her, and who have sworn to destroy her. With them liberty is hopeless, and only by their prompt expulsion can the country be saved !”

This manifesto, which was issued in the form of a circular and sent to all the popular societies, bearing date the 5th of April 1793, was made the subject of a furious Girondin attack on the 12th. Guadet, mounting the tribune, read the circular in full. Marat, on its conclusion, contented himself with rising in his place with the words, “It is true.” The remark was followed by the usual storm, accompanied by cries of “To the Abbaye !” and demands for a decree of accusation. This time, however, Marat had the whole of the Mountain behind him, and it was only too apparent that the struggle had now become one of life and death between the two parties. At the first lull, Marat ascended the tribune. “What is the use of this vain talk ?” he exclaimed ; “they

seek to throw dust in your eyes by an imaginary conspiracy, in order to hush up a conspiracy which is only too real. There is no longer any doubt about it. Dumouriez himself has set the seal to it, by threatening to march on Paris, to effect the triumph of the faction which he calls 'the sane portion of the Assembly' against the patriots of the Mountain." Here vehement applause from the benches where the public sat interrupted the speaker. "But wishing to give the whole of France unequivocal proofs of my loyalty," continued Marat, "I have demanded a decree which shall put a price on the head of the younger Egalité, of the pretended regent, of the former Comte d'Artois, and of all the rebel Capets. The Mountain, as you have seen, wished this proposition to be put to the vote, while the conspirators made a horrible clamour in order to oppose it. It is time that these conspirators should be unmasked, should fall under the sword of the law. I will renew my proposition, and we will see on what side are the supporters of Orleans." Renewed applause from the public tribunes greeted the speaker's peroration. This direct thrust hit the Girondins hard, some of whom had been in direct communication with the now discredited Dumouriez, with reference to his favourite scheme of a resuscitated Constitutional monarchy, under the son of Philippe Egalité, who, at a later date, became Louis Philippe, "King of the French." Danton followed in support of Marat's proposi-

tion. After a long and stormy debate the Girondins, however, succeeded in carrying their original demand for a decree of accusation against the "People's Friend." The public, the galleries reserved for whom were now crowded, became furious ; meanwhile the sitting was raised and the bulk of the members hastily dispersed. A crowd composed of about fifty deputies of the Mountain and its sympathisers surrounded Marat, who, going towards the door, was confronted by an officer of the Guard with the decree of arrest in his hand. In their hurry, however, "the conspirators" had forgotten to get it signed by the President or the Minister of Justice. Marat, in consequence, refused to allow himself to be arrested. Meanwhile the public descended from the galleries and filled the body of the hall. In a few minutes Marat left the building with his friends, followed by an enormous crowd.

The same evening he indited an address to the Convention, which was read the next day, in which he pointed out that the importance of the persecution to which he was being subjected lay in the fact that it was the first step in an organised conspiracy to effect the political extinction of the Jacobins and the Mountain. If it were mere personal spite which concerned himself alone, it would not matter, but "if they succeed in achieving their criminal projects in my case, soon they will come to Robespierre and Danton and all patriot deputies who have

given proof of energy." He concluded: "Before belonging to the Convention, I belong to the country. I am now going to protect myself against their attempts, continuing to support the cause of liberty by my writings, until the eyes of the nation are opened to their criminal projects. Only a little patience, and they will fall beneath the weight of public execration." The reading of the document was greeted with rapturous applause by the Mountain. On the demand of Danton, it was laid upon the table, which was immediately besieged by crowds of Montagnards eager to affix their signatures to it. Prolonged tumult followed, but after sundry propositions and a speech from Robespierre protesting against the decree and cautiously defending Marat, the *appel nominal*, or roll-call of the names, was ordered. In spite of the enthusiastic expressions of many deputies of the Mountain in recording their vote, the Girondins still dominated the Plain sufficiently to secure a majority of twenty-eight votes for the decree of accusation. It should be observed that the Committee, in their report on the question, had found it prudent, in the existing temper of public opinion, to drop the question of the original manifesto, on the occasion of Dumouriez's desertion, which had served as a pretext for the Girondins' attack, the counts of accusation being now based on two articles—the *first* one in the *Journal de la République* for the 5th of January, an article written during the dissensions pre-



ceding the King's trial, in which Marat had suggested the dissolution of the Convention ; and the *second*, that of the 25th of February, relating to the riots, and containing the passage about the "forestallers." A deputy added to the charge the further count of having demanded a dictator. On the decision of the Convention becoming known, great excitement ensued in the Paris Sections. On the 15th of April, the Mayor of Paris, who was now Pache, a new and zealous recruit of the Mountain—who had previously for a time been Roland's colleague as Minister for War, but had resigned and been elected to the mayoralty on the 14th of February—appeared in person before the Convention to present an address of protest from thirty-five out of the forty-eight Sections. Rousselin, the orator of the deputation which accompanied him, pointed out that, while they did not want a dissolution of the Convention, they wanted the expulsion of twenty-two of the leading Girondist deputies. In truth, the action of the Girondin party in allowing their rancorous hatred of Marat to get such complete control of them was simply suicidal, in view of the suspicion which now fell upon them from all sides of collusion with Dumouriez. It only affords another illustration of the oft-repeated saw "that those whom the gods intend to destroy, they first make mad." Marat continued diligently writing, and superintending the publication of his journal, although daily expecting a summons. This did not arrive

until the 22nd, and then only on great pressure from without, as the Girondists were anxious to postpone the hearing of the case till the time for the renewal of the jury lists, when they could "pack" the tribunal with their own men. On the morning of the 23rd a notice of the situation appeared in the *Publiciste*. "People, to-morrow your incorruptible defender will present himself before the Revolutionary Tribunal. He has always wished you happiness, his innocence will triumph. His enemies will be confounded. He will come out of the struggle more worthy of you, and will console himself in this new trouble by the hope of the advantages the cause of liberty will derive from it." On the evening of the 23rd, Marat constituted himself a prisoner. He was accompanied by numerous colleagues of the Convention, and by a colonel of the National Guard.

The next day, the 24th of April, the trial came on. The hall of the tribunal was early crowded, many persons having remained over night to ensure for themselves good places. The Revolutionary Tribunal had been established on the 10th of March previously on the motion of Danton, and it was before the Revolutionary Tribunal that Marat was cited. The proceedings began at nine o'clock, Marat introducing himself with the words: "Citizens, it is not a criminal whom you see before you, it is the apostle and martyr of liberty; it is only a group of factious persons and intriguers who have obtained this

decree of accusation against me.” The presiding judge, Montané by name, calling upon the accused to declare his name, quality, and residence, received the reply: “My name is Jean-Paul Marat, aged forty-nine years, a doctor in medicine, and deputy to the National Convention, residing in Paris, Rue de Cordeliers, No. 36.” The usher of the court then reads the accusation, as formulated by the Committee, of the decree of the Convention, which states that Marat is declared accused of having in his paper provoked to murder and massacre, the contempt and dissolution of the Convention, and the establishment of a power destructive to liberty, and is ordered to appear before the Revolutionary Tribunal; the Minister of Justice to be charged with the execution of this decree. The public prosecutor then reads passages from Marat’s writings, tending to support the allegations in the decree as formulated by the Committee. Marat, on interrogation, unhesitatingly avows the incriminated writings. Witnesses are then called, the first being an Englishman, who deposed through an interpreter that, being at the house of Thomas Paine, deputy to the Convention, he had heard an article read which had been inserted in the journal of M. Brissot, and which quoted passages alleged to have been written by Marat, advocating the massacre of all Englishmen. And that about that time a young Englishman named Johnson, who lived in the same house in the Faubourg St. Denis with

Paine, stabbed himself, leaving behind him a scrap of paper on which were the words, "Day of liberty ! Marat has murdered it by preaching Anarchy, which is much more cruel than despotism. I can no longer endure these atrocities, which are repugnant to the virtue of a Republican." Marat, on the invitation of the judge, asked if the witness had not seen Brissot and others at Paine's house. The witness replied that he had not. The public prosecutor then demands that Brissot should be at once cited to appear before the tribunal as a witness. A letter was accordingly sent to the President of the Convention from the presiding judge of the tribunal. On applause breaking out from the public, the prisoner turned to them and said : "Citizens ! my cause is yours. I defend my country ; I request you to preserve the most profound silence, to deprive our enemies of the opportunity of saying that the court has been influenced in any way." The editor of Brissot's journal, *Le Patriot français*, who was now under examination, declared that the paragraph had been sent to Brissot by Thomas Paine. The accused then wished to know who had furnished Brissot with articles, since the decree interdicting journalism to deputies. Through the presiding judge Marat again interrogates the witness as to whether he possesses the manuscript of the note he alleges Thomas Paine to have given to Brissot, relative to the young Englishman who he stated had stabbed himself. The witness

replies that probably the printer had it. A subpoena, to appear immediately, was issued against the printer, also to the young Englishman Johnson, who according to Brissot's journal was dead, but who was otherwise alleged to be alive. Thomas Paine is next called, and deposes that he had communicated the fact to Brissot without giving him the document. The young Englishman had stabbed himself because he had the impression that Marat was about to denounce his friend Paine as one of those who voted for the King's respite. Paine, on being shown the paragraph as it appeared in the paper, then declared it to have been utterly mutilated and disfigured. The printer now arrived, and deposed that he had been ill for some time, and had had to leave a substitute in his place; he knew nothing of the matter. He had, however, brought with him several slips of copy, which, on the demand of Marat, were handed over to the usher of the court. The public prosecutor, knowing the fact that the law forbade printers to destroy within a certain time manuscripts entrusted to them, procured an order from the court that the particular manuscript in question should in any case be delivered within eight days. The young Englishman Johnson, who had stabbed himself, having entered the court, was then examined, but nothing further of importance was elicited. Without waiting for the arrival of Brissot, the President called upon the prisoner for his defence

against the charges contained in the decree of accusation.

Marat began : " Citizens, if the Girondin and Brissotin faction, and the other satellites of despotism—if, I say, this horde of criminals, who do not cease to persecute ' patriots,' had not accused me of being a man of blood, an inciter to crime, I should never have permitted myself to express such opinions as those contained in the numbers of my journal that have been cited. Citizen jurors, the rectitude of my judgment and purity of my intentions are known, and if I have printed the things that have been read to you, it was with no bad intention. My most earnest solicitude has always been that the Convention should receive the confidence of the people. To wish to dissolve it as I am accused of doing is farthest from my thoughts. Examine my conduct ; I ask no mercy of you, still less indulgence, I claim only justice, and to be punished if guilty." He then briefly recalls his various services to Liberty, from the publication of the *Chains of Slavery* up to that moment. He refutes the idea of there being any criminal intention in aught he had written, and briefly but scathingly exposes the administration of the Girondins, especially their conduct towards the chiefs of the Mountain, the Commune, and the Paris Sections. He also dwells on the fact that his accusers had been compelled by popular pressure to abandon the original basis of the indictment, and to substitute for this two new

charges (or rather old charges revived) which had nothing to do with it, thereby exhibiting the malicious intent actuating them. "Full of confidence in the judgment, equity, and good citizenship of the tribunal, I myself desire the most rigid examination of this affair. . . . I claim nevertheless a consecutive reading of the denounced numbers, for it is not from isolated and excised passages that one can judge the meaning of an author; it is only by reading what precedes and what follows that we can estimate his intentions rightly. . . . If, after such a perusal, there remain any doubts, I am here to dispose of them."

Marat in conclusion expressed his willingness to accept the judgment of the jury on all the incriminated numbers. The public prosecutor then recapitulated the facts contained in the decree of accusation, after which the President summed up, stating the questions for the jury's decision as follows:—

"Is it proved that there are in the writings entitled the *Ami du Peuple* and the *Publiciste parisien* passages provoking to murder, pillage, and the dissolution of the national representation? And further, is it true that Marat, the admitted writer of these journals, has published them with counter-revolutionary intent?" The prisoner then withdrew. After a deliberation of three-quarters of an hour, the foreman gave the following verdict of the jury:—"We have examined with care the passages cited from the

journals of Marat, and the better to appreciate them, we have not lost sight of the known character of the accused and the time of revolution during which he had written, and we cannot impute criminal intentions to the intrepid defender of the rights of the people. It is difficult for an ardent patriot to keep back his just indignation when he sees his country betrayed on all sides. And we declare that we have observed nothing in these writings of Marat calculated to substantiate the crimes which are imputed to him." All the other jurymen expressed their adhesion to the foregoing statement, which was at once registered as their unanimous verdict. The presiding judge then announced that, having heard the report of the jury, he acquitted Jean-Paul Marat of the accusations brought against him, and further ordered that he be immediately set at liberty, and that the present judgment be published officially, and placarded in the usual public places. Marat, turning to the court, said, "Citizens, jurors, and judges, who compose the Revolutionary Tribunal, the fate of the traitors to their country is in your hands ; protect the innocent, punish the guilty, and the country will be saved !"

Scarcely was the acquittal pronounced than shouts of applause resounded from court, from staircase, from antechambers, and from corridors. As the news spread, the crowds outside in the street took up the joyful acclamation, and it was with difficulty the "People's Friend" resisted



being then and there borne aloft shoulder-high by enthusiastic patriots. Crowds thronged the streets between the Palais de Justice and the hall of the Convention. Bouquets of spring flowers and garlands rained upon the people's hero. The cortège was stopped every moment to receive the congratulations of the heads of Sections. A chair had been secured, and the "People's Friend," escorted by National Guards, was carried along amid deafening cheers, crowned with oak garlands. These he was compelled to wear, notwithstanding that he repudiated them when first offered. Rarely was such a triumph known before in Paris. Crowds lined the streets, shouting and waving hats. The crowds reached the Convention doors, forced their way in, and bore Marat to President Lasource's chair. The feelings of this Girondin, the arch-enemy of Marat, may be better imagined than described. A sapper named Rocher took upon himself the part of spokesman, and thus addressed him: "Citizen President, we return to you our brave Marat. We know well how to confound all his enemies. I have already defended him at Lyons, and I shall defend him here, and he who would take the head of Marat must first take the head of the sapper." After an objection of the President's had been overruled by the powerful voice of Danton, permission to defile past the President's chair was accorded. Men, women, and children rushed in shouting, "Long live the Republic, the Moun-

tain, and Marat !” Marat ascended the tribune. “Legislators, the proofs of good citizenship and of joy which resound throughout this building are a homage rendered to the national representation, to a colleague in whose person the sacred rights of a deputy have been violated. I have been perfidiously inculpated ; a solemn judgment has assured the triumph of my innocence ; I bring you back a pure heart, and I shall continue to defend the ‘rights of Man,’ of the citizen, and of the people, with all the energy nature has given to me.” A roar of applause followed, pikes were flourished, Phrygian caps thrown up, National Guards bearing Marat in triumph to his place in the bosom of the Mountain, after which the concourse gradually dispersed. Marat had become the personification of the French Revolution, the embodiment, in his own short, thick-set, rough, and unkempt figure, of the current ideal of liberty, of the sovereignty of the people. Paris rang with his praises, and congratulations poured in daily from all the departments. From end to end of France the name of the popular tribune was a household word to be loved or feared.

The acquittal of Marat was especially noteworthy as a symptom of public feeling outside the Salle de Manège, inasmuch as the tribunal was at this time by no means composed, as it was later, of avowed Jacobins. The names of the jury are almost all those of completely unknown men, the only eminent one among

them being that of Cabanis, the well-known physiological writer and psychologist, noted for his unhappy analogy between the brain and the stomach, to the effect that the one secreted thought much as the other secreted bile. The presiding judge himself would seem to have been, in fact, an unattached Moderate. Michelet, with the dishonest partiality and perversion of fact which characterise his history of the French Revolution, when it is a question of calumniating the Jacobin leaders, and above all the "People's Friend," represents the tribunal as at this time, as it was later, composed solely of pronounced Jacobins, and hence insists that Marat's acquittal was a foregone conclusion. He even has the effrontery to expressly compose it of the *personnel* of a year subsequently, although not a single individual composing the tribunal in its phase under the "terror" was functioning upon it in April 1793.

Marat's triumph sounded the death-knell of the Girondins. It was plain that the Convention in its present form would not work. Either the Gironde or the Mountain must conquer, and in its conquest annihilate the opposite party. All could now clearly see that the two parties could not live in the same assembly. The Girondins, however, still retained a certain supremacy over the Plain in the Convention, a fact indicated by their success in getting their own men elected to the post of President. On the 10th of May the sittings ceased to be

held at the old Riding School, the Convention transferring itself to the private Royal Theatre in the Tuileries, which had been recently prepared for its reception. It was this building—that a century before had witnessed the first nights of Molière's comedies, to the delectation of high dames and courtiers—which was now about to form the stage of many a tableau of the great drama of the French Revolution. It was here that the final passage in the struggle between Mountain and Gironde took place.

On the 16th of May the attack was begun by the Girondins, their partisan, Isnard, having been voted to the presidency. Once more it was Guadet who led the assault. The question on the order of the day concerned an alleged illegal arrest of a magistrate by the Commune. Guadet, in an indignant speech, charged the Commune and the Jacobins with being in a conspiracy to destroy the Convention; in consequence, he proposed the immediate dissolution of the Commune, and the transference of the legislative power to Bourges, on the ground that in Paris it was in the midst of a hostile population, at the call of leaders who were actively plotting against it. The Committee of Public Safety, which had been instituted soon after the Revolutionary Tribunal, in March—but which did not at first have the power it subsequently possessed—through the mouth of its spokesman, Barrère, opposed the motion of Guadet as to the

transference of the Supreme Assembly to Bourges ; and as regards the dissolution of the Commune, proposed as a middle course, that a commission of twelve members of the Convention should be appointed to examine and report on the illegal acts of which the Commune was accused, before other measures were adopted. The amendment of the Committee was at once agreed to, and the Commissioners appointed, the reactionary parties carrying the day completely in the election of its *personnel*. It was composed of six Royalists, three Girondins, and three members of the Plain. Beginning at once to show itself in its true colours, it arrested the chief of a Section, and sequestered the papers of his Revolutionary Committee. Finding itself supported by the reaction alike within and outside the Chamber, it became bolder, summarily arresting Hébert, the popular substitute of the Procureur of the Commune, the second most important man in the Municipality. Matters now looked serious for the popular party, which, had it not been for the energetic action of the Commune and of the leaders of the Mountain, was in a fair way of being crushed. Reports were already abroad that the Commission of Twelve were contemplating an early remanning of the Revolutionary Tribunal, whereby it should become a fitting instrument of their counter-revolutionary plots. The two great popular clubs, the Jacobins and the Cordeliers, together with the Paris Sections, declared themselves sitting *en permanence*. On

the following day the Commune lodged a protest with the Convention, and the Commission of Twelve doubled the guards at the entrance to the Tuileries.

Marat, who, as we may imagine, had been active the last few days at the Hôtel de Ville organising the opposition with his friends of the Commune, opened the Convention-sitting of the 27th on behalf of the latter, by moving the suppression of the Commission. "It has been sought," he said, "to deceive the people through making it believe in the existence of a plot to assassinate the Statesmen," the sobriquet for the Girondins, especially for the immediate followers of Brissot. This story of a plot to assassinate the twenty-two previously designated Girondins had been diligently circulated within the last few days by the reactionary party. "The proof that this plot does not exist," continues Marat, "is that not one of you has received so much as a scratch." Marat proceeds to denounce the Commission, adding the significant words, "The mass of the people is patriotic; it detests a senatorial despotism as much as a royal despotism; if patriots are driven to insurrection, it will be your work." He concludes by demanding the suppression of the Commission of Twelve as the enemy of liberty, and as tending to provoke the insurrection already threatening. A deputation from one of the interior Sections then presented itself, demanding not merely the suppression of the Commission, but the trial of its members

before the Revolutionary Tribunal. "The Section," it said, "would know how to save the Republic of themselves, if they were forced to do it." The President, Isnard, then pompously rose, and in solemn tones announced, "If the Convention were outraged through any of those disturbances in Paris which had been so frequent since the 10th of March, and which within the last week had become a daily occurrence in all quarters of the city, if they should take the shape of even an attempt to coerce the national representation, I tell you," said he, with melodramatic mien—"I tell you, in the name of the whole of France, that Paris will be annihilated. Yes, France will take such a vengeance on the guilty city, that it would soon be necessary to inquire on which bank of the Seine the capital had once stood." Scarcely were the words uttered when a storm arose throughout the Assembly, in the midst of which Danton's voice was heard crying, "This impudence is beginning to be too much for us; we shall resist you. Let there be no more truce between the Mountain and the cowards who wished to save the tyrant." This attitude of Danton's was significant, for up to this time, although reckoning himself as belonging to the Mountain, he had endeavoured to play the part of peacemaker. The confusion continued; the Mountain and the occupants of the public galleries shook their fists and hurled menaces at the Gironde and its partisans. More Parisian deputations streamed

into the house. The Commandant of the Convention Guard then appeared. He alleged that, while he was endeavouring with a posse of men to clear the lobbies, which had become thronged with excited sectionaries, Marat, pointing a pistol at his head, had demanded by whose orders he was acting. He had refused to show them to any but the President, whereupon Marat had ordered some sectionaries to arrest him. Marat only replied that the fellow was lying impudently.

Guadet, the Minister of the Interior, then obtained a hearing to report upon the state of Paris. He endeavoured to calm the alarmed deputies by assuring them that the Convention was in no way in danger. Meanwhile, certain of the Moderate deputies had heroically beaten a retreat. Numbers of sectionaries having broken through the bar, were sitting amongst the deputies in the body of the house. A tumultuous demand arose that Isnard should quit the chair; this he was ultimately compelled to do, and was replaced by Danton's friend Hérault de Séchelles. "The force of reason and the force of the people," announced the new President, "are the same thing. You ask for a municipal officer and for justice; the deputies of the people will grant it you." He then put the question as to the suppression of the Commission of Twelve and the release of all persons arrested by it. It was declared carried amid tumult, the tumult on the President's announcement of the result at



once changing to enthusiastic cheering, which speedily passed from the crowd within the building to those outside.

The next day the reaction was again victorious within the Convention, and declaring that the vote of the preceding night had been obtained by terrorism and intrusion of outside persons, it procured the re-establishment of the Commission. Hébert, who had been liberated, was now once more at the Hôtel de Ville. On the re-establishment of the obnoxious Commission, Robespierre, Danton, Marat, Chaumette the Procureur of the Commune, and Pache the Mayor of Paris, constituted themselves into an informal committee, to organise, with the aid of the Commune and the Revolutionary Committees of the Sections, the insurrection which they now saw to be inevitable. For the next thirty-six hours the preparations were unremitting. On the 30th, twenty-seven Sections presented themselves at the bar of the Convention. The same day, the Commune, the Clubs, and the Revolutionary Committees of the Sections held a joint meeting, and declared themselves in a state of insurrection. As the result of the deliberations of the preceding day, it had been agreed to model the new movement precisely on that of the 10th of August. This was so strictly carried out that it was considered necessary to go through the farce of formally annulling the then council of the Commune, to be immediately re-elected as before, because, forsooth, on the night before the 10th of August, the old

reactionary Council of the Municipality had been dissolved in order to be replaced by the new insurrectionary body. Henriot was then constituted Commandant of the armed force of Paris, and the Sansculottes of the Sections had each forty sous per day accorded them.

The sitting of the Convention for the 31st opened at six o'clock in the morning to the sound of the *générale* and the tocsin. The memorable insurrection destined to annihilate Girondism had at last begun in very deed. The popular forces then started to lay siege to the Tuileries. The Minister of the Interior declared the movement caused by the rehabilitation of the Commission three days before. Tremendous excitement ensued in the Convention. Pache was summoned to the bar, to explain the meaning of the ominous sounds outside. He professed to have left no stone unturned to maintain order, assuring the Convention that its guard had been doubled and that he had given orders that no alarm-gun should be fired. He had scarcely finished speaking when an alarm-gun was heard. Great consternation on all sides! Barrère, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, begs that the Commission of Twelve may be dissolved. The beating of the call-drum, the clanging of the tocsin, with the boom of alarm-guns at intervals, continuing, alarmed the Plain, who abandoned their colleagues of the Gironde and promptly joined the Mountain in voting the abolition of the Commission in accordance with

the proposal of Barrère and his Committee. But where is Marat? "I left the Assembly," he says, "to deliberate on several important matters with the Committee of General Security,<sup>1</sup> believing that no measures would be carried in the Convention. From there I went to the house of a citizen, to obtain information respecting some aristocratic leaders of the Section Buttes des Moulins. On my return, I discover a great crowd in the Rue Saint Nicaire; I am recognised and followed by the crowd. From all sides resound cries against the Mountain's want of energy. From all sides I hear demanded the arrest of traitor-deputies and intriguers. From all sides shouts of 'Marat, save us!' Arrived at the Carrousel, I observe multitudes of citizens in arms. The crowd increases, always repeating the same cry. I entreat the people not to follow me: I enter the Tuileries and then the pavilion of the Committee of General Security to be quit of them" (*Publiciste*, No. 209). To the Committee he relates all that has happened, and insists on the pressing importance of an immediate dissolution of the Commission of Twelve. But Marat could not evade the crowds which followed him, for he found it necessary to visit personally the Committee of Public Safety, then assembled together with the ministers, Pache, and other

<sup>1</sup> The "Committee of General Security" was the second of the two Committees of Government. It had in its hand the control of police and "justice." The twin-body, the Committee of Public Safety, was responsible for the initiation of public measures and the general work of government.

functionaries. Arrived at the Committee, he insists on the inadequacy of the mere suppression of the incriminated Commission, and urges the necessity of the immediate arrest of the twenty-two Girondins, together with the members of the Commission of Twelve. He then repairs, at the suggestion of the Committee, to the Municipality, to overlook matters, and avert any premature action. Returning to the Convention, in the precincts of the Tuileries, in the corridors and lobbies leading to the theatre, Marat found renewed demands being made by the Mountain, through the mouth of Robespierre, for the indictment of the designated deputies, together with the members of the Commission, the proposition being backed by the acclamations of the public galleries and the sectionaries at the bar. All agreed that liberty was in danger so long as these traitors remained at large. Marat, the implacable, the bloodthirsty, as his enemies represent him, now mounted the tribune, not so much to support the measure demanded by the popular party to clinch its victory, but mainly to secure the erasure of three names from the list of inculpatated, the bearers of which he regarded as more weak than sinning. "As to the really guilty," said Marat, "it was not on account of their action with regard to the tyrant that they merited punishment, this would be to attempt to suppress liberty of opinion, without which there can be no public liberty at all. Their real guilt lies in their long series of

machinations and slanders against the Parisians, and their complicity with Dumouriez, together with the protection they have always accorded to traitors." The decree of accusation was not, however, voted on this occasion ; but, on the motion of Barrère, a second report on the incriminated deputies was ordered from the Committee of Public Safety. The Convention then adjourned and the populace dispersed.

Meanwhile the popular forces of Paris remained under arms, patrolling the streets, but in a perfectly orderly manner. Negotiations went on during the whole of the 1st of June, between the Committee of Public Safety and the insurrectionary Commune. The Committee hit upon the brilliant expedient of a voluntary and reciprocal resignation of the leaders of the two parties. Robespierre and the Mountain would have none of it, however. Active preparations were now made, and continued throughout the night. The tocsin sounded and the *générale* beat in all the principal thoroughfares at break of day, while vast crowds gathered at different points. At eight o'clock on the morning of Sunday the 2nd of June, Henriot presented himself at the Hôtel de Ville, to inform the Commune of the measures he had taken, and that all were determined not to lay down their arms till they had obtained the arrest of the designated deputies, together with the Twelve. After having harangued the vast concourse in the square in front, he led his devoted bands

to the Place du Carrousel before the Tuileries. They were then deployed around the Palace.

Though most of the obnoxious deputies kept away, Lanjuinais opened the sitting by demanding the annulment of the Revolutionary authorities and the outlawing of their members. He had no sooner finished than the petitioners of the Sections came to demand the arrest of the deputies, himself included. Their address concluded with the ominous words, "The people are tired of having their happiness postponed ; they leave it but a moment in your hands, save it, or we declare the people will save it themselves !" Instead of considering the petition, the Convention, at the instance of the Right, passed to the order of the day. At this the deputation of the Sections withdrew in a threatening manner, while large numbers of the public quitted the galleries and followed it. Shouts of "To arms !" were heard outside. The Committee of Public Safety, through its spokesman Barrère, made its report on the situation. It now formally recommended that the Convention should ask the incriminated members to voluntarily suspend themselves. Some of those implicated accepted this solution, but the majority refused. Marat, speaking in the discussion, expressed his willingness, for his part, to suspend himself, on condition that the decree of accusation were passed, with the modification that the names of the three persons he had already designated as unjustly included in the list should

be eliminated, and those of Fermont and Valazé should be put in their place. At that moment the Dantonist, Lacroix, who had been absent for some time, returned in a state of violent agitation, declaring the Convention to be no longer free, that it was surrounded by troops at the order of the Commune, in short, that the Assembly was virtually a prisoner in its own house. At this news even the Mountain was for a moment staggered, the Dantonist section giving vent to expressions of indignation. But who was the soul of this movement? It was Marat. He it was who, the previous evening, had mounted the tower of the Hôtel de Ville and sounded the tocsin; who had kept alive the energy of the Commune and its determination to obtain the decree of accusation at all costs—by force if necessary. He it was who, on the morning of the Sunday, had gone up and down the ranks of Henriot's men, exhorting them to be induced neither by threats nor promises to lay down their arms until the momentous crisis had actually passed.

The upshot of Lacroix' announcement and the consternation produced was the proposal that the President, Hérault de Séchelles, should pass out at the head of the Convention. This suggestion was adopted. What followed we give in Marat's own words. "He descends from his seat," writes Marat, "nearly all the members following him, forces open the bronze doors, while the guard makes way. Instead of at once

returning and demonstrating thereby the falsity of the clamours, he conducts the Convention in procession round the terraces and gardens. I had remained at my post in the company of about thirty other 'Montagnards.' The galleries, impatient at not seeing the Assembly return, began to murmur loudly; I sought to appease them, rushed after the Convention, and found it at the Pont Tournant. I exhort it to return to its post; it returns, and reassumes its functions. The motion for the decree of accusation is made once more, and this time is carried by a large majority, and the people retire peaceably. Thus passed, without the shedding of blood, without outrage of any sort, without even disorder, a day of alarms which saw a hundred thousand citizens assembled in arms, provoked as they were by six months of machinations and intrigues, added to atrocious calumnies, fabricated by their cowardly oppressors" (*Publiciste*, No. 209).

Marat, with a modesty which ill accords with the reputation of self-assertion his enemies have sought to fasten on him, omits the fact, vouchsafed by other witnesses, that the Convention, on appearing before the armed force without, was greeted with unanimous cries of "Long live Marat and the Mountain!" thus constituting him the personification of Jacobin principles. He also omits to mention how, in the concluding proceedings within the Convention on that memorable day, he found himself,



by the sheer force of circumstances, in the position of practical dictator to the august Assembly ; how the erasure of the names eliminated by him, and the insertion of that of Valazé, was carried without discussion on his mere demand. Marat at this moment might without exaggeration have been designated the uncrowned King of France.

Such was the end of the Girondin faction—thirty-two placed under arrest and the remainder escaping into the provinces, many of them there to suffer divers fates, if anything worse than that of their brethren in Paris. The names of those arrested were as follows :—Gensonné, Guadet, Brissot, Gorsas, Pétion, Vergniaud, Sallés, Barbaroux, Chamlon, Buzot, Birotteau, Lidon, Rabaud, Lasource, Lanjuinais, Grangeneuve, Lehardi, Lesage, Louvet, Valazé, Lebrun (the Minister for Foreign Affairs), Clavière (Minister for Contributions), Kerleregan, Gardieu, Rabaud-Saint-Etienne, Boileau, Bertrand, Virgée, Molleveau, Henri-Larivière, Gomère, and Bergonin. It is supposed to be the correct thing in a historian to speak of the “courage of the Girondins.” Yet, while not denying that individual members of the party, Lanjuinais for instance, on occasion showed some pluck, where the courage of the party as a whole comes in it is difficult to see. It tacitly acquiesced in, and even by the mouth of Roland condoned, the September massacres at the time, while afterwards, when it thought them a convenient stick with which to beat

Marat and the Commune, overflowed with horror at them as a monstrous crime. It professed to wish to save the King, at all events his life, and yet, when the time comes, dread of unpopularity induced at least one section to vote the death-sentence like any ordinary truculent Montagnard. The crucial day of the 2nd of June found the majority of its members absent from their places in the Tuileries theatre. To crown all, there was a disorganised *sauve qui peut* of the remainder of the party not under arrest into the provinces. On the other hand, if we have no evidence of courage on the part of the Girondins as a whole, but rather, considerable indications of cowardice, we have very distinct proofs of mutual dissension within the party, the only unanimity being shown in perfidious machinations with treacherous generals on the frontiers, in back-stairs intrigue at home against the Parisian representation, alike parliamentary and municipal, and last but not least, in the fabrication of the most barefaced and slanderous lies against all who differed from their principles and policy. Yet this wretched assortment of politicians has been patronised by the average writer on the Revolution ever since. And why is this? The reason is not far off. The Girondins were the last bulwark, at this stage of the Revolution, of property, privilege and class-order, against the desperation of the masses.

On the day following the revolution which

had destroyed the Girondins as a party, Marat addressed a letter to the Convention, published in the *Publiciste* (No. 209) : "Impatient to open the eyes of the nation, abused as to my intentions by so many hired libellers, unwilling to be regarded as an object of discord, and ready to sacrifice all to the return to peace—I hereby renounce the exercise of my function as deputy, until judgment has been passed on the accused representatives. May the late scandalous scenes never be repeated in the Convention ! May all its members sacrifice their passions to their duties ! May my colleagues of the Mountain let the whole nation see that, if they have not as yet fulfilled all their pledges, it is because their efforts have been thwarted by wicked men !" Thus Marat kept the promise he had made of resignation, after the voting of the decree he regarded as essential to the public welfare.

For some weeks past a change had been noticed in the composition of the *Publiciste*. Numbers entirely from Marat's pen had become rare, the paper being now mainly composed of letters from outside, to which the "People's Friend" simply added his reflections. M. Bougeart would connect this with the excitement following the acquittal. "It was that the emotion," he says (*Marat*, vol. ii. p. 253), "caused by the judgment, and without doubt by the testimony of public sympathy, had been so deep in a nature so sensitive, that the

‘People’s Friend’ had not been able to resist it ; he had been taken ill. Since the middle of April he had complained of increased indisposition. Serious symptoms seem to have developed themselves at this time in the left lung. He was seen no more at the Assembly till the time of the indictment of the Girondins ; then he only seemed to acquire new vigour from the over-excitement of fever ; but this supreme effort sufficed to exhaust him. After the great revolution which established the Jacobins and the Mountain as the supreme power in France, the public saw little more of Marat. Privation, nervous excitement, and overwork had produced their effect. The distressing skin disease from which Marat continued to suffer, though not mortal in itself, no doubt acted on, and in its turn was reacted on by, the state of alternate excitement and prostration produced by the above causes. For a whole fortnight, during this month of June, Marat did not quit his bed, but the publication of the journal continued all the same. As M. Bougeart says (vol. ii. p. 254), “The editing of the *Publiciste* is a veritable bulletin of his health. When the articles are long the invalid is better ; when they are but a few lines his prostration is complete.” The journal and the reports of the Convention sittings, together with his enormous correspondence, were daily brought to Marat’s bedside ; and, so far as his strength permitted, were read and commented on. Though he had

made up his mind under no circumstance again to attend the sittings of the Convention till the Girondins had been adjudicated upon, Marat continued to address his colleagues of the Convention in writing. In No. 224 of the *Publiciste*, however, he complains of the lack of attention his communications have received. This being the case, he feels it would be a neglect of his duty to remain longer from his post. "Since the days of my voluntary suspension, I have addressed several letters to the Convention, in which I proposed useful measures on important subjects. They have not been read. Yesterday again the letter that I sent to the President of the Convention has had the same fate. I had flattered myself that I had an alternative to my own presence, but my hopes have been deceived. The danger of the country recalls me to my post. The profound silence that I have kept for a fortnight ought to suffice to dissipate all the clouds that overshadow me. I declare then that I go at once to resume my functions." He did indeed with a great effort raise himself from his bed of sickness to be present in his place in the Convention. But he was only seen there for two days. On the second day he returned to his room, never again to leave it alive. But the journal now once again appeared with almost perfect regularity, forming the only outlet left for this man of truly superhuman energy. From the 23rd of June, the day following his last visit to the Convention, to the 14th of July,

the day after his assassination, only three numbers failed to appear, and assuredly the "People's Friend" must have indeed been ill on those days. Times had changed now with him from the day when, some six months before, he apologised to his readers and excused himself, in No. 93 of the *Journal de la République*, for the numerous gaps in the publication of the paper. "Several of my readers," he then writes in an introductory note, "have murmured at the interruption of my paper for some days. I owe them an explanation which will show them that I have not had an instant to prepare it, overburdened as I am with the weight of occupation. In the first place, I may tell them that, of the twenty-four hours of the day, I only devote two to sleep, and one only to the table, toilette, and domestic concerns. Outside those that I consecrate to my duties as deputy of the people, I regularly employ six to receive the complaints of a crowd of unfortunate and oppressed, of whom I am the defender, to test and make note on their complaints, to read and reply to a multitude of letters, to overlook the publication of a work I have in the press, to take notes of all the interesting events of the Revolution, to jot down my impressions on paper, to receive denunciations, to assure myself of the *bona-fides* of the denunciators, and finally to bring out my paper. These are my daily occupations. I can hardly, I think, be accused of laziness. For nearly three years I have not

had a quarter of an hour of recreation. In addition I have had to find time to work at some speeches for the tribune of the Convention. This I could only do by suspending less urgent occupations, and as such is the reason of the interruption of my journal, it will doubtless find grace in your eyes."

Such was the fearful pressure at which the "People's Friend" lived, so long as it was physically possible. In addition, it must be remembered that he literally starved himself, not merely, as above appears, to save the time of eating for his public work, but through giving away to "patriots" who needed help all he had but the barest pittance. At the beginning of July (*Publiciste*, No. 234), Marat writes, respecting a report that the Girondin volunteers of the departments were combining to march on Paris: "Let them come; they will find Thuriot, Lindet, Saint-Just, all the brave Montagnards; they will see Danton, Robespierre, Panis, etc., so often calumniated; they will find in them intrepid defenders of the people. Perhaps they will come to see the Dictator Marat. They will behold a poor devil in his bed, who would give all the dignities of the earth for a few days' health, but always a hundred times more concerned for the misfortunes of the people than for his malady." This article proves, if nothing else, Marat's complete disinterestedness and the absence of all feelings of petty jealousy as regards his colleagues of the Mountain. The

only fault we have to find with it is, in fact, an excessive generosity, which seems to have blinded even Marat to the true character of Robespierre.

Marat, although he had voted for the establishment, with great powers, of the Committee of Public Safety, in accordance with his often-expressed views respecting the necessity of a strong Revolutionary Government, was nevertheless much dissatisfied with the existing composition of that body. He had written several articles on the subject, the last appearing in the very number of the *Publiciste* which he was correcting at the time of his assassination, and which appeared the day following. Speaking of the members of the Committee, he characterises them as "for the most part easy-going persons, who are present scarcely two hours in the twenty-four at the sittings of the Committee. They are ignorant of almost everything that is done there. . . . Among their number is one, moreover, whom the Mountain very imprudently nominated, and whom I regard as the most dangerous enemy of the country. It is Barrère, whom Saint-Foix indicated to the monarch as one of those constitutionalists out of whom he could make the most. As regards myself, I am convinced that he swims between two streams, to see which one will gain the ascendant; it is he who has paralysed all efforts of vigour; it is he who enchains us with a view of strangling us. I challenge him to furnish



proof to the contrary when, in conclusion, I denounce him as a Royalist.”

With the foregoing article Marat's political life ends. The closing scene of his personal life belongs to our next chapter.

## CHAPTER IX

### MARAT'S ASSASSINATION

AFTER the revolution of the 2nd of June, which brought about the extinction of the Gironde as a political power, several of the Girondin deputies, among them Barbaroux, Buzot, and Pétion, had taken refuge in the town of Caen in Normandy. Normandy was of Girondin sympathies, and Caen became the centre of Girondin conspiracy. A Committee was sitting at the Hôtel de Ville at Caen, enrolling citizens willing to serve in the army which it was endeavouring to raise against Paris and the Mountain, now the dominant party of the Convention. A young woman who was living at Caen, and fully imbued with the Girondin sentiments there prevalent, came in frequent contact with the refugee deputies recently arrived, especially Barbaroux, owing to whose conversation her hatred of the Mountain took a deeper hue. Among the men of the Mountain and of Paris there was no one who came in for a larger share of bitter invective on

the part of the refugees than the "People's Friend," Jean-Paul Marat. Her thoughts brooded night and day over all that she heard as to the wickedness of the Mountain and its incarnation, Marat.

Marianne Charlotte de Corday d'Armont was born in 1768 at St. Saturnin, in the department of the Orne, of a family of the *petite noblesse*, claiming descent from the great dramatist Corneille. On Charlotte attaining her teens she was placed for educational purposes in a convent at Caen, but in the early period of the Revolution took up her abode with an old aunt, living in one of the ancient patrician houses of the town. Here, besides doing a little housework, she appears to have spent the most of her time in reading the current literature of the period—the *Aventures de Faublas*, the *Voyage d'Anacharsis*, the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, etc. In addition, translations of Plutarch's *Lives* and one or two other well-known classics, then in everybody's hands, formed her daily intellectual food. She also read the Revolutionary papers circulating in the district, which were almost entirely of Constitutionalist or Girondin tendency, and accordingly she became a strong partisan of the Revolution in this sense. Phrases about the Republic and Liberty, derived from these organs, and from her perusal of Plutarch's *Lives*, formed her emotional and intellectual stock-in-trade. It was alleged that, a lover of hers, a certain Colonel Belsunce, having been killed in a

Jacobin disturbance, she had already, before the arrival of the Paris refugees, conceived a deadly hatred of Jacobinism, especially of him whom she regarded as its personification—the “People’s Friend.” To this statement, however, little credence can be attached in the absence of corroborative evidence. Another lover has been given her in Bourgon Lougrais, Procureur Syndic of the department of Calvados. Yet again Barbaroux himself has been suggested as having inspired her passion. Here also we have to do with inadequately supported conjectures. Whatever her love-affairs may have been, if she had any, it seems clear that at the period of which we write she had been for some time past absorbed by one dominant passion, the notion of immortalising herself, like her classical heroes, by murdering the man who was so prominently identified with the hated Jacobin principles. No sooner had the deputies arrived at Caen than Charlotte Corday sought to make their acquaintance. Whether her blood-thirsty design had already taken possession of her before her interviews with them, or whether it first took form in consequence of suggestions emanating from them, it is impossible to say. Her excuse for visiting them at the hotel where they were lodging was to interest them in the case of a friend of hers, the Lady Superior of a local convent, whose pension had been suppressed at the time of the general suppression of ecclesiastical pensions. She saw Barbaroux, who,

although expressing his doubts as to the result, consented to write to a colleague in the Convention, Duperret, who was still remaining in Paris, and ask him to interest himself in the matter. To this letter there was no reply, for the very good reason that it did not reach its destination, having been impounded on its way. She then spoke of going herself to Paris to interview the Minister of the Interior directly on the subject. This was her excuse for the preparations she now made for her journey to the capital. Carrying with her a letter of introduction she obtained from Barbaroux to his friend Duperret, she set out on the 9th of July. The only thing that betrayed her purpose was a remark made on taking leave of Pétion, who, as a "lady's man," termed her politely the "beautiful aristocrat who was going to see the Republicans." To this she replied, with an affectation of sternness, "You judge me to-day without knowing me, Citizen Pétion ; the day will come when you will know who I am." On the morning of her departure she addressed a farewell letter to her father, excusing herself for leaving without his permission, and alleging her intention of going to England, on the ground that it was no longer possible to live in France in tranquillity. The letter concluded, "Adieu, my dear papa ; embrace my sister for me, and do not forget me." At two o'clock in the afternoon of the 9th of July, she started on her journey, and to judge by a subsequent statement of hers,

her travelling companions were partisans of the Mountain, who now and then enlightened the monotony of the rumbling coach by discussing public events from the Jacobin standpoint. The journey to Paris occupied two days. Arrived in the capital, she took up her quarters in a small hotel in the Rue de Vieux Oldestein. The same day she went to see the deputy Laure Duperret, who, however, was not at home, being in his place in the Convention. She returned in the course of the evening, and asked him to accompany her the following day to the Minister of the Interior. On her departure Duperret remarked to one of his daughters that the woman appeared to have some intrigue on, for he had noticed something singular in her appearance and manner. Next morning early he went with her to the Ministry of the Interior, but they were not received, and making an appointment for later on in the day, they parted. Meanwhile, owing possibly to the letter from Barbaroux which had been intercepted, Duperret found on his return home that a police perquisition had been made at his house, his papers placed under seal, and himself declared under supervision. This, of course, upset the plan. Duperret went to Charlotte's hotel and informed her that his company to the Minister of the Interior could only do her and her cause more harm than good. On inquiring whether she proposed returning at once to Normandy, she replied that she did not know, but that he need not trouble to come and see her again.

Just as he was leaving, she exhorted him not to appear again in the Convention, but to proceed at once to join his colleagues at Caen. He replied, however, that his post was in Paris, and that he could not abandon it. "You are committing a folly," said she; "once more, go! take my advice and fly before to-morrow evening!" They then parted.

The assassin seems first of all to have had the idea of committing her crime in the Convention itself, doubtless with the view to theatrical effect, with herself as the heroine of the melodrama; but on being informed by an attendant at her hotel that Marat was then ill, and no longer present in the Convention, she decided to obtain an interview with him at his house. The evening she occupied in drawing up a manifesto, "To the French friends of the laws and of peace," justifying the crime she was about to commit. This document terminated with the words, "My friends and relations, be not uneasy, no one knows of my projects."

Next morning, the 13th of July, she rose early, strolling through the Palais Royal, after having bought a journal. She stopped an instant before a cutler's shop, and entering, asked to see some strong knives. She was shown one with an ebony handle in a leather case, which she bought for forty sous. Returning to her hotel, she remained in her room till half-past eleven, when she again went out. Hailing a hackney coach on the Place des Victoires, she drove to No. 30

Rue de Cordeliers, subsequently rechristened Rue de l'Ecole de Médecine.

On the door of Marat's domicile being opened to her, she asks to see the "People's Friend," but is informed by the porteress that Marat is ill and can at present receive no one. On returning to her hotel, she indites the following letter :—  
"Citizen, I come from Caen ; your love for your country makes me suppose you will like to know the unhappy events in that part of the Republic. I shall present myself at your house about seven o'clock ; have the goodness to receive me and to accord me a moment's interview. I shall put you in a position to render a great service to the country." This letter she then sends by messenger to the Rue des Cordeliers.

Marat, as we know, was now confined to his room with lung trouble and nervous excitement, verging at times on brain fever, in addition to his chronic inflammatory skin disease. He sought a temporary relief from his distressing condition by wearing a large handkerchief soaked in vinegar round his throbbing temples, and by the continuous use of hot sitz-baths. The *Publiciste*, although appearing with tolerable regularity all this time, was, as already said, mostly composed of letters, his own original work on it being limited to, at most, one or two pages. Numerous deputations were sent to inquire as to his state. To the Cordeliers, who sent to beg him to rest for a while from all public work, and devote his time entirely to the



recovery of his health, he replied, "Ten years, more or less, as regards the duration of my life do not concern me in the least, my only desire is to be able to say with my last breath, 'I die content, the country is saved !'" The previous day, the 12th of July, the Jacobin Club had sent a similar deputation. In the report made before the Assembly of the Club, they say: "We have been to see our brother Marat ; he is very thankful for the interest you take in him ; we found him in his bath, a table with an inkstand and some journals by his side, occupying himself ceaselessly with public affairs. . . . Much patriotism is compressed and bound up in a very little body. The violent struggle of this patriotism, which exhales at every pore, is killing him. He complains of forgetfulness on the part of the Convention in neglecting to read several measures of public safety he has addressed to it."

Marat's flat was rented in the name of Simonne Evrard. It was situated on the first floor, and was composed, according to the *procès verbal*, of five rooms. The first was an anteroom lighted by a window on the left-hand side. On entering this anteroom, and turning towards the door, three apartments presented themselves on the same plan. One to the right, lighted by a window looking on to the court ; to the left a bedroom, having a view of the streets through two case-ments of Bohemian glass ; and between these two rooms a small apartment, serving as a bathroom. The fifth room was the salon, which was entered

by a door from the anteroom on the left, and also looked out upon the street. The *personnel* of the domicile on the 13th of July was composed of Marat, Simonne Evrard, Catherine Evrard her sister, Jeannette Maréchal, the cook, and Laurent Bas, a compositor connected with the journal. The *conciérge* of the house was a Mme. Pain.

The fateful day of the 13th of July 1793 found Marat somewhat better than he had been for some days previously. He had been able without undue exhaustion to prepare the number of the *Publiciste* for the next day, containing the article on the composition of the Committee of Public Safety, with its appreciation of the character of the Committee's reporter and spokesman, Barrère, quoted in our last chapter. He had, in addition, found strength to attend to some correspondence. Amongst the letters just received was one from his old friend Philippe-Rose Roume, of Marat's scientific days, to whom reference has already been made in an earlier chapter of this work, and who was now at the Conciergerie, awaiting his trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal, on certain charges connected with his conduct as National Commissioner in San Domingo. Roume begs Marat's help, protesting his innocence. There were also letters from Garat, Minister of the Interior, and Gohier, Minister of Justice, with reference to certain poor clients of Marat's, in whom he was endeavouring to interest them. About half-past seven in the evening, Charlotte

Corday arrived for the second time before Marat's door. She again demanded admittance, and was again refused. On her insisting, a dispute arose between Corday and the women of Marat's household. The noise reaching Marat's bathroom, he called Simonne in to him, and inquired what it was all about. On hearing that it was the young woman from Caen, whose letter he had received in the course of the day, he told Simonne to admit her. Marat, covered by a large rug, was lying back in his bath, over which a board had been laid to serve as a writing-desk. Corday entered, and on Simonne's leaving the bathroom, she took a seat at Marat's side. "What is happening then at Caen?" inquires Marat. "Eighteen deputies in sympathy with the department are supreme there," answers Corday. Marat asks for their names. On these being given, most of them those of well-known Girondins, including Buzot, Barbaroux, Louvet, Pétion, Guadet, etc., to which were added those of four administrators of the department, Marat raises himself and writes them down one by one as his informant is speaking. After he had finished writing out the list, he remarks, "It will not be long before they are guillotined" (*Ils ne tarderont pas à être guillotiné*s).<sup>1</sup> At that

<sup>1</sup> Such were the words the assassin first reported him to have uttered; but later, after having had time to arrange her narrative, she changed this, for obvious reasons, into the phrase, "I will shortly have them all guillotined in Paris" (*Je les ferai bientôt tous guillotiner à Paris*), which, as Mr. Morse Stephens has pointed out, was absurd, seeing that Marat had no power to have any one guillotined.

moment the woman, rising, draws the knife she had bought in the early morning from her corset, where she had concealed it, and deals the sick man with all her force a blow in the side. Falling back, her helpless victim (as alleged) utters one cry for Simonne, "*A moi ! chère amie ! A moi !*" and breathes his last on the spot. Royalists, Constitutionalists, and Girondins could do no more,—Marat, the "People's Friend," was dead ! As we know, he had long foreseen the possibility of thus meeting his end. Unable either to suppress or to corrupt him, his enemies assassinated him.

On hearing the cry, Simonne rushed wildly into the room, shrieking, "O my God ! he is assassinated." She was followed by the rest of the household. The attempt of the murderess to escape was frustrated by Laurent Bas and Jeannette Maréchal. Springing up from the dead man's side at the sound of the struggle, Simonne flung herself upon Corday and threw her to the ground. Rising, she was again endeavouring to escape, when Laurent Bas, seizing a chair, felled her with it. Yet again she rose ; but escape was now impossible, as the way was barred by an excited crowd, attracted by the sounds emanating from the well-known domicile of the "People's Friend." Among those present was a surgeon-dentist, Michon-Delafondée, who lived and worked in the same house. He at once bandaged up the wound, and had Marat carried from the bath and laid upon

his bed. He felt the pulse, it had ceased to beat ; proceeding to examine the wound, he found that it had deeply penetrated the right lung—so deeply that he could pass the whole of his forefinger along its course. He was followed in his examination by the chief surgeon of the Hôtel Dieu, who also certified as to death having taken place. The Commissary of Police of the Section at length arrived, followed by the Commandant with a file of men with officers of the departmental police and the Mayor, and proceeded at once to the arrest and interrogation of the assassin. She cynically avowed the crime, alleging that she regarded Marat as the principal author of the country's disasters, and had sacrificed his life to save the country. On her pockets being searched, a watch made at Caen, her passport, and a considerable sum of money were found upon her. Before long, Legendre, Chabot, and two other deputies arrived, together with two higher police officials, sent in the name of the Committee of General Security. Chabot, an ex-ecclesiastic, was a member of the Mountain, who, in company with his colleague Bazire, subsequently became involved in the jobbery and falsification in connection with the *Compagnie des Indes*. Thinking he detected the corner of a paper projecting from Corday's bodice, Chabot instantly thrust his hand forward to seize it. The woman, pretending to fear for her modesty, started away from him, at the same time thrusting her shoulders violently back.

The movement was sufficient to break the lacings of her corset, the result being to completely expose her bosom, a folded piece of paper falling out at the same time. Doubling herself up immediately, she begged that her hands might be released from the cords which bound them behind her back, that she might arrange the disorder in her toilet. Her hands being untied, she turned to the wall and reattached the broken corset-string, after which, showing her wrists bleeding from the ligature, she asked to be allowed to turn down her cuffs and to put on her gloves before being again bound. On being asked by the Commissary if she were a virgin, she, as a matter of course, replied in the affirmative. The interrogatories and other formal proceedings having occupied much time, it was not till near midnight that she was confronted with the corpse of Marat. Her callousness was for a moment shaken. "Yes! yes!" she cried, "it is I who have killed him." After some discussion between the representatives of the different authorities present, each of whom demanded her, she was removed to the Abbaye; difficulty, however, was experienced in rescuing her from being lynched by the indignant crowd which filled the Rue des Cordeliers and the neighbouring streets, who would have torn her to pieces. She swooned in the coach in the course of the journey.

What was the paper that fell out of Charlotte Corday's corset in Marat's domicile? It was a

letter intended for use should she again find it impossible to gain access to the "People's Friend." Here it is: "I wrote to you this morning, Marat, have you received my letter? I could not believe you had, as they refused me admittance; I trust that to-morrow you will accord me an interview. I repeat that I come from Caen. I have secrets to reveal to you of the utmost importance to the safety of the Republic. *Besides all this, I am persecuted for the cause of liberty. I am unhappy; this itself is sufficient to give me a claim on your protection.*" This last sentence might truly serve as an epitaph for the "People's Friend." His whole career is indicated therein. Volumes could not speak more for Marat than this one sentence, penned by his assassin. Oh, exponents of a class public opinion, satellites of privileged power and wealth, whose tap of indignation and gassy horror is always turned on to the full whenever a representative of privileged class-interest is smitten down—you, who can slaver a slain monarch or statesman with undeserved adulation, who can fulminate against the author of his death at the top of your voices, when will you find your cant no longer profitable? What has been your attitude towards the "People's Friend" and the dastardly wretch who murdered him—her sick and helpless victim? As one might only expect, your sympathy has changed sides. Your "horror" at assassination has suddenly evaporated. For the man who suffered a four years' martyrdom

for his convictions and for the cause of the disinherited, and who finally sealed his testimony with his blood, you have had no words but those of coarse vituperation, and the foulest calumnies that malice can devise; while his assassin assumes under your pens the aspect of an angelic being. Here you do not talk at large of "the sacredness of human life," as when a Carnot sinks beneath the dagger of a crazy fanatic, or a Canovas falls before the pistol of an illicit avenger of innocent blood. It is quite right that Marat, the eternal enemy of the crimes of place and power, the man whose only arm and only authority lay in his pen and the truths it expressed, should be murdered. It is a shocking thing, an event calculated to awaken in all respectable persons "a thrill of horror," when a real live statesman or public functionary, who, armed with all his authority, has perhaps used it to destroy a nation, or to oppress the helpless, meets with a similar doom. To every unprejudiced reader of history the deed of Charlotte Corday must appear as the most dastardly, cruel, and wanton political assassination in the world's archives. Save for his membership of the old Committee of Supervision of the Commune, the previous year, and his actual function as Convention deputy, Marat had never been invested with authority, or held any official post whatever. He was never even on a single one of the numerous committees into which the Convention divided itself. His sole force lay in



his integrity and the obvious sincerity of his principles, and in his lucid and forcible literary expression. Until within two months of his assassination, he had stood almost alone against the world of political parties, his own included. For it was only within the last few weeks that his true worth had been recognised, even by his friends, the Jacobins and the Mountain. The crime of Charlotte Corday, look at it how we may, is destitute of any excuse whatever ; its real object was to gratify the vanity of a criminally-disposed woman. The reading of the Plutarch had proved too much for an ill-balanced mind ; just as in the present day the reading of reports of murder cases in the daily press may sometimes have the effect on similar minds of causing them either to commit murder or to give themselves up to the police under the impression they have done so.

The news of the murder spread like wildfire through Paris. Groups formed in the streets to discuss the event. The next day it was the sole topic of conversation. The popular party was struck with consternation, perceiving in it the first act of a Girondin conspiracy to immolate the "patriots" of the Mountain. At the Jacobin Club, Laurent Bas became quite a hero, his least word was hung upon with avidity. Here Bentabole, ascending the speaker's tribune, this time not to criticise Marat but to express the common sentiment, observed : " It is noble, undoubtedly, to hear citizens proposing to

replace Marat, but this task is not so easy as many think. When we have found a man who, like Marat, has spent for four years whole nights meditating on the welfare of the people and the fall of tyrants ; who has combated with equal audacity kings, priests, nobles, intriguers, villains, and conspirators ; who has braved iron, fire, poison, prison, even the scaffold, such an one will be worthy to replace Marat, and ought, after him, assuredly to hold the first rank." Speaking to the proposal to give Marat the honours of a public funeral on a great scale, Robespierre, always the mean, the petty, jealous of better men than himself, tried to damp the enthusiasm of his colleagues, under the specious pretext that the Republic had not yet come off victorious over its foes, without and within, that only after it had finally triumphed would it be the time for the public recognition on a great scale of its benefactors and martyrs. Camille Desmoulins and the brother of Lepelletier St. Fargeau were commissioned to draw up an address on the assassination of Marat, to be sent by the Jacobin Club of Paris to all the affiliated societies of the departments.

Long before the *séance* began, the public galleries of the Tuileries theatre where the Convention sat were thronged. On the President, Jean Bon St. André, taking his seat, all eyes were fixed upon him. He rose and announced in solemn tones : " Citizens, a great crime has been committed on the person of a representative of

the people,—Marat has been assassinated in his own house.” The announcement was greeted in the assembly by an oppressive silence. Sections then presented themselves at the bar, demanding the honours of the Pantheon, reserved for great men, for the “People’s Friend.” The Section of the Pantheon declared it a debt the Convention ought to pay at once. The deputation of the Section Contrat Social exclaimed through their orator, “Where art thou, David? thou hast transmitted to posterity the image of Lepelletier dying for his country, there remains for thee yet a picture to paint!” Numerous speeches followed in the strain of elegy on the dead man. At the Commune, Hébert pronounced a funeral oration before the Council General, demanding of the Convention the honours of the Apotheosis for the illustrious dead. It was then decided that the sculptor Bonvalet should be instructed to make a bust of the deceased, to be placed on the table of the council-room. The body of Marat had been meanwhile transferred from his house to the Great Hall of the Cordeliers’ Club, where it reposed in state on a triumphal bed. All day the place was filled, not only the nave but also the side chapel, for the building had been formerly a church. Prints, rings, medallions, busts now began to be the order of the day.

Marat’s body had been embalmed before the lying in state—an operation attended with some difficulty owing to the fact that decomposition

had set in very early. Two days after the assassination, on the 15th of July, the Convention unanimously decided, on the proposition of Chabot, that it would assist in a body at the obsequies of Marat. Bентаbole moved that the nation should make itself responsible for the debts of Marat. This suggestion, however, proved quite superfluous, as Marat left nothing owing. But though he had left nothing owing, neither had he saved anything, for, on the inventory of his effects being taken, the only money found in his rooms—and he had none elsewhere—amounted to twenty-five sous (about a shilling) in the depreciated *assignats* then current. The goodness of poor Marat's heart had never been appealed to in vain by distressed or needy "patriots." The Cordeliers' Club requested the Commune for the possession of the heart of the "People's Friend," to be preserved in the old church, now become its meeting hall. This was granted. It was decided that, on the following 10th of August, every citizen should wear a band of crape on his arm in memory of the murdered "People's Friend," at the fête to be held to commemorate the anniversary of the taking of the Tuileries. The Section Fils Français, which comprised the Cordeliers' Club and Marat's residence, demanded that the body should be sent the round of the departments, so that even after his death the "People's Friend" might continue to animate the hearts of the people with the love of liberty.

This, however, for obvious reasons, was found impossible. The Sections vied with each other for the honour of receiving the body of the "People's Friend" in the ground within their boundaries. It was finally decided that the inhumation should take place under a clump of trees in the garden of the Cordeliers' Club, where Marat had often addressed its members on the burning questions of the day.

The funeral took place about five o'clock on the afternoon of Tuesday the 16th of July. No expense was spared to make the magnificence of the ceremony worthy of the occasion. The painter David was the marshal of the obsequies. The coffin was laid upon a gorgeous bed, which was again placed on a splendid hearse raised at a considerable height above the crowd, and approached by steps. It was supported by a dozen men and surrounded by groups of children dressed in white and bearing branches of cypress in their hands. Then came the Convention, then the representatives of the National Authority, then the Commune, then the "patriotic" clubs, while bringing up the rear followed a concourse which from its magnitude might have been readily taken for the whole population of Paris. The funeral cortège, starting from Marat's house, which, as we know, was quite near the place of interment—the garden of the Cordeliers' Club—made a long detour. On leaving the Rue des Cordeliers it passed along the Rue de Thionville (Dauphine), across the Pont Neuf, along the

Quay de la Ferraille, across the Pont-au-Change, returning by the Théâtre Français (Odéon), and then betaking itself to the Cordeliers. The cortège chanted patriotic airs, while every five minutes a salvo of artillery was fired from the Pont Neuf.

In a report of the scene in No. 48 of the *Journal de la Montagne*, we read: "The mortal remains of Marat have been carried in pomp to the courtyard of the Cordeliers. This pomp had in it nothing but what was simple and patriotic. The people, assembled under the banners of the Sections, followed peaceably. . . . The procession lasted from six o'clock in the evening until midnight. It was formed of the citizens of all Sections, the members of the Convention, those of the Commune and those of the departments, of the electors and the popular societies. Arrived in the garden of the Cordeliers, the body of Marat was laid down under the trees, the leaves of which lightly stirred and multiplied a soft and tender light. The people surrounded the coffin in silence. The President of the Convention first of all made an eloquent discourse, in which he announced that the time would soon arrive when Marat would be avenged; but that the reproach of the enemies of the country and the people must not be justified by hasty and inconsiderate acts. He added that liberty would not perish, and that the death of Marat could not but consolidate it. Discourses from the principal authorities followed, and then the people began

to defile in the order of their Sections before the grave. The monument had been executed by Martin the sculptor, and imitated a mass of granite rocks, emblematic of the unshakable firmness of Marat's devotion to the cause of the Revolution. Below was a vault closed by an iron grating, containing the coffin, with two urns, one enclosing the intestines and the other the lungs of the victim. A file of the journal was also, by request, laid in the tomb. Above was inscribed on the stone the simple epitaph: "Here reposes Marat, the 'People's Friend,' assassinated by the 'People's enemies,' the 13th of July 1793." Young trees were planted round the grave. As each Section defiled before the tomb, its orator spoke a few words in eulogy of the martyr of the Revolution. One of these, Guirant by name, observed: "You, who have seen nothing in Marat but crimes; you, who ceaselessly speak of him as a man of blood, produce the names of his victims." He might well make this demand, for among the sixty-four persons who had been guillotined during the past twelve months, not one had been denounced or even referred to by Marat (Bougeart, vol. ii. pp. 284 *sqq.*). Whatever may be said as to Marat's connection with the summary executions which took place during the first week in September 1792, nothing is more certain as a matter of fact than that he was neither directly nor indirectly responsible for a single one of the executions by the guillotine which occurred between that

time and the date of his death. This is noteworthy, not on the ground that any special stigma is necessarily attached to Marat even if this had not been the case ; for up to this time the proceedings of the Revolutionary Tribunal had been orderly, careful, and not inhumane, according to the ideas of the period, and there is no reasonable doubt that the vast majority of the sixty-four persons above-mentioned who were condemned were fairly-convicted conspirators in favour of reaction in one or other of its forms against the established order of things. Marat therefore might very well have had a hand in bringing some of these individuals to their doom, but as it happens he had no hand in it, and this from the conventional point of view ought surely to be regarded as denoting a kind of supererogatory virtue on his part.

Two days later, the 18th of July, the heart of Marat was transferred from the tomb to the Cordeliers' Club. There a kind of second funeral ceremony took place, at which twenty-four members of the Convention and twelve of the Commune assisted. An order had been given to search Paris for an artist who could make a chef-d'œuvre worthy to receive so precious a treasure. The search does not appear, however, to have been successful, and the decision lighted upon a splendid vase of agate, which, together with its covering, was cut out of one piece and enriched with the most costly precious stones. This had been one of the great crown



treasures of the kings of France. It was now to enclose the heart of the most implacable enemy of kings. On this occasion also a detour was made by the procession, this time through the gardens of the Luxembourg, where tents had been raised, under which were made speeches at intervals. The vase was then carried into the nave of the church where the Cordeliers held their meetings. It was proposed to raise an altar to the heart of Marat. Here various members of the Society delivered funeral orations. "How is it," exclaimed one, "that it takes Nature some thousands of years to produce men of the stamp of Jesus and Marat !" The next speaker developed the same idea, saying, "Like Jesus, Marat ardently loved the people, and only the people ; like Jesus, Marat detested nobles, priests, and rogues," etc. This description of elegy was, however, cut short by the Sansculotte orator, Brochet, who indignantly declared that "Marat was not made to be compared to Jesus : the latter had given birth to superstition and had defended kings, while Marat had the courage to crush them. A truce," he cried out, "to this talk of Jesus Christ ; such remarks are idiocies !" The urn containing the remains was then suspended from the roof of the Cordeliers' place of assembly. The President closed the ceremony with the words, "Awake, Cordeliers ! it is time. Let us hasten to avenge Marat ! let us hasten to dry the tears of France ! We have sworn that his enemies shall be proscribed ;

the oath is sacred—we have sworn it to the people !”

But to return to Charlotte Corday. As we have seen, she had been taken from Marat's house to the prison of the Abbaye. Here she occupied the cell or small room which had previously seen Mme. Roland and Brissot as prisoners, and she was watched by two gendarmes. She had scarcely arrived before the vanity which was the real motive of her crime showed itself, for at once asking for paper and ink, she wrote a letter to the Committee of General Security, begging that her portrait might be painted. This was not accorded her, but the painter Häuer, who was present at the trial, in his capacity of National Guard, made a sketch of her before the tribune, which he subsequently worked up into the well-known portrait. The same day she began a long letter to Barbaroux, which consisted for the most part of self-exculpation and glorification, and which remained unfinished. It is dated from the “Prison of the Abbaye, from the late chamber of Brissot, the second day of the preparation of peace,” and begins with an account of her journey to Paris. After stating that she travelled with Montagnards, “whose conversation was as stupid as their persons were disagreeable,” she goes on to say, “one of our fellow-travellers . . . took me for the daughter of one of his friends, and crediting me with a fortune I do not possess, after bestowing on me a name that I'd never heard of, finished by

offering me his fortune and his hand." The fellow-traveller, it appears, took the protestations of the woman as a piece of play-acting, and chaffed her accordingly. "In the night," she continues, "he sang plaintive songs, suitable for producing sleep. I left him finally in Paris, refusing to give him my address, or that of my father, from whom he wanted to ask my hand; he took his leave of me in a very bad humour."

On the morning of the 16th, the prisoner was removed to the Conciergerie, where she was interrogated by the President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, Montané. She avowed having come to Paris for the express purpose of killing Marat, whom she accused of being a monster who was devouring the whole French people. She obstinately declared, in reply to all the President's questions, that the crime was alike conceived and executed by herself alone, and that no other person whatever so much as knew of her intention. The interrogation ended, she occupied herself with finishing the letter she had begun the previous day at the Abbaye to Barbaroux. Here she says she wished to present her portrait to the department of the Calvados, but that her letter to the Committee asking for a portrait-painter had remained unanswered. She also informs Barbaroux that she had taken Gustave Doulcet, the deputy for Caen, as her counsel. The letter is dated at its close, "Tuesday the 16th, eight o'clock in the evening," and is addressed to "Citizen Barbaroux,

at the Hôtel de l'Intendant, Rue de Carmes, Caen," and is signed simply "Corday." She also wrote a farewell letter to her father, begging his forgiveness for having disposed of herself without his consent, and boasting of having delivered France from a tyrant.

The next day, Wednesday the 17th of July, at eight o'clock in the morning, Charlotte Corday was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. Montané, the President, had three assistant judges who sat with him; Fouquier-Tinville was the Public Prosecutor; her chosen advocate Doulcet being absent, owing, it is said, to the letter she wrote to him not having been delivered till it was too late, the President nominated two other counsel for the defence. The act of accusation having been read, the assassin once more avowed her crime, adding that she alone conceived it, as she alone had executed it. "I wished to immolate him on the summit of the Mountain, and if I could possibly have accomplished my purpose in this manner, I should have preferred it to any other, as I should have been sure to have become the instant victim of the fury of the people, which was just what I wanted, for as I was believed to have been in London, my name would have remained unknown." To this it might have been pointed out that, as it was, there had been plenty of chance for the assassin to have met her death by popular fury, of which nevertheless at the time she did not seem particularly anxious

to avail herself. "Since how long have you formed this project?" asked the President. "Since the affair of the 31st of May, the day of the arrest of the deputies of the people," replied the prisoner. "I have killed one man to save a hundred thousand." "How could you regard Marat as a monster," the prisoner is asked, "who only allowed you admittance by an act of humanity—because you had written that you were persecuted?" The prisoner was obliged to admit Marat's humanity in this respect, and feebly to take refuge in the assertion that he was otherwise a monster. There seems, however, to be a little confusion here, for, as we have seen, the letter referred to was never presented. On Fouquier-Tinville remarking upon the skill with which the mortal blow had been dealt, and adding, "You must have been very practised at this crime," the prisoner pretended to be shocked, exclaiming, "Oh, the wretch! he takes me for an assassin." The letter to Barbaroux was then read, containing the absurd falsification of the last words of Marat, to the effect that in a few days he would have the deputies guillotined in Paris. Marat, as we know, held no official position whatever at this time, beyond that of the simple deputy, and had no power to order any one to be guillotined, either at Paris or anywhere else. The statement, moreover, does not agree with her own account immediately after the occurrence. On turning her head to one side the prisoner perceived, to

her intense delight, that one of the audience (Häuer) was engaged in taking her portrait. The pose of the antique heroine, we need scarcely say, was now assumed with more ardour than ever by the woman who, according to her own account, was so anxious to be torn in pieces that not even her name might go down to posterity. After the knife had been put in evidence, and recognised as the instrument of the crime by the prisoner, the Public Prosecutor rose to claim a conviction. He was followed by the senior counsel for the defence, Chaveau-Legarde, who, in a report he has left of the trial, confesses to an embarrassment. He had been instructed by the President to confine his defence to the question of insanity; the prisoner, however, made signs to him that she did not wish to be defended at all. After some seconds of silence, he spoke as follows:—"The accused avows with sang-froid the horrible outrage that she has committed; she avows the most frightful deeds; in a word, she avows all and does not seek to justify herself. This, citizen jurors, is all the defence she has. This imperturbable calm and this entire abnegation of self, which indicate no remorse, not even, so to say, in the presence of death itself—this calm and this supreme abnegation combined are not natural, they cannot be explained otherwise than by the assumption that an exaltation of political fanaticism has placed the poniard in her hand. And it is for you, citizen jurors, to judge what weight you ought

to give this moral consideration in the balance of justice. As for myself, I leave it entirely to your judgment."

The jury at once brought in a unanimous verdict of guilty, the capital sentence was passed, coupled with confiscation of goods. Turning to her counsel, the prisoner thanked him, and begged him to take over as a legacy from her the obligation to pay the debts she had incurred in prison. This was accepted, and the debt, amounting to some 36 livres (francs) was settled by Chaveau-Legarde. Charlotte Corday was conveyed back to the Conciergerie immediately after the trial was over. There her vanity was solaced in her last hours by the permission accorded the young painter, Häuer, to have access to her for the purpose of finishing her portrait. The prisoner also found time to indite a note to Doulcet, the counsel first selected by her, accusing him of cowardice in not appearing to defend her, owing, as she supposed, to his fear of compromising himself. Cutting off two locks of her hair, she gave one to Häuer and the other to the *conciierge* of the prison.

It was customary to conduct the condemned with the least possible delay to the guillotine. Corday owed her unusually long respite after the sentence had been passed to the fact that the Public Prosecutor, Fouquier-Tinville, on the termination of the trial, had engaged in a dispute with the President on a slight modification that had been made by the latter in the terms of

indictment, in consequence of which the necessary signature to the form handing the prisoner over to the executioner Sanson had been forgotten.

It was not till late in the afternoon that the murderess, clad in the well-known red shirt, emerged from the door of the Conciergerie to enter the tumbril waiting to convey her to the Place de la Révolution. At that moment a violent thunderstorm burst over Paris. The crowds were so dense that the vehicle could only proceed at a slow pace. This was not disagreeable to Corday, as it enabled her once more to strike an attitude in the presence of the hostile multitude through which she passed. Arrived at the Place de la Révolution, after a journey occupying more than two hours, Sanson uncovered the guillotine, at which his prisoner turned pale. At length the preparations having been completed, Charlotte Corday ascended the scaffold. Retaining her melodramatic cravings to the last, she bowed to the people, and was about to attempt to speak when she was seized by Sanson and his assistant, and the shawl covering her shoulders was removed, at which it is said her face became crimson. She was then laid on the block, the knife fell, and a moment later her head dropped into the basket. Sanson's assistant, a man named Legros, taking the head from the basket, according to a common custom of the time, held it up by the hair, to show it to the assembled crowd. He then, it is said, gave



it a box on the ear, at which the cheeks again blushed. This blush, although apparently well attested by contemporary evidence, most readers will be inclined to relegate to the realm of myth.

The inflated sentimentality lavished on Corday has two causes. Foremost comes the fact that her victim was the unrelenting opponent of power and privilege, in other words, of the governing party of his day. The second cause is the "feminist cultus" according to which every female criminal is by virtue of her sex an object of tender regard and admiration. If, as Professor Lombroso, who has examined it, alleges, the skull of Corday exhibits all the characteristics of the prostitute-criminal type, it may well be that had there been no Marat, the woman's blood-thirst and love of notoriety would have found an outlet later on in the poisoning of some hapless lover or husband. Be this as it may, the sentimentality spoken of began almost before she had mounted the scaffold. Among the crowd who followed the tumbril containing the assassin of the "People's Friend" was a young man, Adam Lux by name, a native of the town of Mainz, recently annexed to the French Republic. The countenance and melodramatic pose of the assassin seemed to have driven this foolish young man crazy. He maundered about her being greater than Brutus, and declared that it would be a beautiful thing to die with her. These sentimental ravings

were instrumental in bringing the poor young fellow in very deed later on to the guillotine. This species of lunacy seems to have been in the Lux family. A sister of his, as a result of the perusal of his works, then at the height of their popularity, fell in love with the once famous, though now half-forgotten German writer, Jean-Paul-Friedrich Richter. She persecuted the unfortunate man of letters, whom she had never seen, with love-messages, couched in the high-flying style of the period, and the response naturally not being to her wishes, drowned herself in the Rhine. After the execution, the body of Charlotte Corday was subjected to medical examination, and subsequently thrown, without ceremony, into a pit dug in the Madeleine. A cross was erected in 1804 to mark the spot, and in 1815 the remains were removed to the cemetery of Mont Parnasse.

The cultus of Marat now took proportions of an unprecedented character. Every good citizen throughout France was expected to wear some memento of the "People's Friend." Rings, scarf-pins, medallions were manufactured by the hundred thousand and sold as fast as they were made. His bust was prominent at every public meeting-place, his portrait hung in every citizen's room, however poor. Statuettes graced every Revolutionary *cheminée*. Medallions, busts, and statuettes took every conceivable form. Sections, streets, and public places were named after Marat. The Rue des Cordeliers was renamed

Rue de Marat shortly after the funeral ; Montmartre was also called Mont Marat. The Rue and Faubourg Montmartre received a like designation. It was proposed to rename Havre de Grace, Havre de Marat,—such was the enthusiasm even in the departments. Women christened their children Marat. “We will give them for a gospel,” said one, “the complete words of this great man.” It is said that the future Napoleonic king of Naples, Joachim Murat, sought permission to change the second letter of his name into conformity with that of the deified martyr. The painter David, according to promise, executed a large cartoon representing the assassination. By the side of the tomb of Lazouski on the Carrousel was erected an obelisk, under which were placed the bust, the lamp, the writing-desk, and the bath of Marat. Before long innumerable civic crowns covered the place. The tragedy now on everybody’s lips became a favourite theme of theatrical representation. For weeks the death of Marat was exhibited on the stage of all the principal theatres of Paris, and the example was soon followed in the departments. *The Death of Marat ; Marat in the Cellars of the Cordeliers, or the Day of the 10th of August ; The Apotheosis of Marat and Lepelletier ; Marat in Olympus ; Arrival of Marat in the Elysian Fields ; The true Friend of the People, or the Victim of Federation*—such are a few of the titles of the numerous *pièces d’occasion* of which

Marat and his fate formed the subject. Hymns to the memory of the "People's Martyr" were composed by hundreds and hawked about the streets. The fêtes and pageants in his memory continued throughout the whole of Revolutionary France for weeks and even months to come. Never before in the history of the world can we find a parallel to this deification of the murdered revolutionist Jean-Paul Marat throughout the late summer and autumn of 1793. Everything that was connected with him acquired the character of a sacred and priceless relic. Thus, on the 19th of August, a Marat Festival of Women was held in Paris, on the Place du Carrousel, where the obelisk before spoken of was subsequently erected, in which various objects connected with the assassination were exposed to public veneration. Foremost came the bath in which Marat had died. This was followed by a huge tray on which was set out the table, the chair, the writing-desk with its pens and papers. This was followed again by a large bust of the dead patriot. The Convention and the popular societies as representing France, the Commune in the name of Paris, once more assisted at this fête. On the 19th of November the Convention passed a decree, according to Marat the honours of the Panthéon. At the same time two pictures of David were exhibited in the hall of the Convention. A credit of 24,000 livres (francs) was passed to defray the cost of the engraving of the latter's work and its distribution in the

departments. These decrees, however, remained for the time dead letters. It was not till after Thermidor and the fall of Robespierre that Leonard Bourdon, in the name of the Committee of Public Instruction, which had been charged with the details of giving effect to the decree, carried a resolution that the ashes of Marat should be Panthéonised on the last of the Sans-culottides, one of the fête-days of the new Republican Calendar. On the 21st of December 1794, the ceremony was solemnised with great pomp. An usher of the Convention stationed before the great entrance door of the *ci-devant* church of St. Geneviève, now the Panthéon, proclaimed in a loud voice the decree conferring on Jean-Paul Marat the palm of immortality. The urn containing the remains was then carried into the building by the great entrance door, the same time that the "impure" corpse of Mirabeau, which had been formerly accorded the same honour, was ignominiously thrust out at a side door. The ceremony was accompanied by patriotic hymns and a cantata by Méhul. The President of the Convention having pronounced an elegy, the fête closed with a general chorus to the glory of martyrs and the friends of Liberty, the words by Joseph Chénier and the music by Cherubini being both composed expressly for this occasion. But this was the last public act of homage to the memory of the great revolutionist. The Thermidorians and others wishing to oppose another great

revolutionary reputation to that of the fallen and guillotined Robespierre, whose memory, being more recent, they dreaded most, Marat for the time being served their purpose. But the tide of reaction swept steadily onward, carrying into obliquity in its course, one after the other, all the men, things, and events of the great revolutionary years. Less than six months later, the Convention passed a decree that no citizen should be accorded the honours of the Panthéon until ten years after his death. The following day David's painting of the death-scene, together with the bust of Marat, were removed from the Convention's place of assembly. This was the first overt sign that the reaction had reached Marat, although attempts had already been made in print to destroy his reputation. But once started, the reactionary wave broke all bounds. In the theatres and public places the busts of Marat were thrown down and broken in pieces. The latest decrees of the Convention were taken as cancelling the existing Panthéonisations, and accordingly the remains were removed, those of Marat being interred in a neighbouring burial-ground. All honourable memory of Marat in public or private was henceforward sought to be obliterated in the minds of the French people. And from this time began the legend, only exploded in our own day, of *Marat the inhuman monster*.

## CHAPTER X

### MARAT'S FAMILY

WE have already seen that the sum of twenty-five sous in paper was all the money Marat left behind him. Unlike some modern publicists, the "People's Friend" never succeeded in combining disinterested labour for humanity with large commercial profits. On the death of her husband, therefore, the question of her means of subsistence became a serious one with Simonne Evrard. Certain outstanding debts, the inability to pay which had given Marat some uneasiness before his death, would appear to have been all settled in his lifetime. For, although the Convention decided to pay them, no creditor seems to have presented himself. Notwithstanding the almost delirious enthusiasm for Marat's memory which was witnessed the first few weeks after his death, the reactionist party lost no time in beginning their work of detraction. A certain Jacques Roux, a former friend of Marat's, had the effrontery to continue the publication of the *Publiciste* under the name

of *Publiciste de la République*, par l'Ombre de Marat, under the old epigram, and taking it up at the number at which it had left off. Another person, Leclerc, a week after the assassination, started an *Ami du Peuple*, which he kept up for nearly a month. On the 8th of August, Simonne Evrard appeared at the bar of the Convention to protest against these outrages. Her face and figure now bore the marks of grief, aggravated by material want. She was no longer recognisable as the bright and intelligent young woman who, two years before, had sacrificed her fortune to the cause of the Revolution as represented by the man she loved. "Citizens," said she, "you see before you the widow of Marat. I do not come here to ask your favours, such as cupidity would covet, or even such as would relieve indigence,—Marat's widow needs no more than a tomb. Before arriving at that happy termination to my existence, however, I come to ask that justice may be done in respect to the reports recently circulated against the memory of at once the most intrepid and the most outraged defender of the people." She proceeded to denounce the intrigues of the reactionaries, who had spared no money to travesty his views and blacken his character. She complained that, even amongst the numerous engravings representing the assassination, their hand was manifest. In some of these the murderess was depicted with an angelic physiognomy, while that of her victim was disfigured



by the most horrible convulsions. Worse still was the treacherous device of interlarding with speciously patriotic sentiments, and an apparent zeal for Revolutionary principles, wild and extravagant proposals, in the name of Marat, with the object of destroying his reputation, by representing him as a fool and a madman. "I denounce to you, in particular," she said, "two men, Jacques Roux and one named Leclerc, who pretend to continue the patriotic papers of Marat, and make his *shade* speak in order to outrage his memory and deceive the people. Therein, after having<sup>57</sup> enunciated Revolutionary commonplaces, the people are told to proscribe every kind of government. They advise, in the name of Marat, to stain the day of the 10th of August with blood, because his sensitive soul sometimes gave vent to just anathemas against public blood-suckers and against the oppressors of the people. . . . It is very remarkable that these two men are the same who were denounced by Marat a few days before his death to the Cordeliers' Club, as hired by our enemies to trouble the public tranquillity, and who, in the same sitting, were solemnly expelled from the midst of this popular society." She again sought to drive home the fact on the Convention that these persons were leaving no stone unturned to perpetuate, to give new life to, the old Girondist calumny, that Marat was a partisan of anarchy and a blood-thirsty demagogue. She concluded : "If you leave these men unpunished, I denounce

them here to the French people—to the universe. The memory of the martyrs of Liberty is the patrimony of the people : that of Marat is the only possession left me ; I consecrate to his defence the last days of a sorrowful life. Legislators, avenge the country, honesty, misfortune, and virtue, by striking the most cowardly of all their enemies” (*Moniteur* of the 10th of August, 1793). The Convention remained silent, the President not even replying, as was the custom in cases of this kind. At length Robespierre rose to move that the petition be sent to the Committee of General Security, which was agreed to. It was, of course, never heard of more. Meanwhile Simonne Evrard had written to Marat’s sister, Albertine Marat, who was then residing at Geneva, begging her to come and live with her in Paris. She consented, and Simonne and Albertine now set up their common *ménage*, which lasted uninterruptedly to the death of the former in 1824. Till their deaths Marat remained the god of both women ; their one aim was the rehabilitation of the truth concerning him. Scarcely had Albertine arrived in Paris before she set about writing a defence of her dearly-loved brother. It was published about six weeks after Simonne’s appearance at the bar of the Convention, and bore the title, *Reply of the Sister of the “People’s Friend” to the Detractors of Marat*. It is only a small octavo pamphlet, but is full of affectionate regard. “Marat died poor,” con-

cludes Albertine, "and his friends have no reason to blush for it ; had he wished, he could have been rich, no one can venture to dispute this ; but he felt only too well that the love of riches ill accorded with the love of the people, and he preferred the latter."

Simonne now began to seriously think of the republication of the complete works of Marat, and on the 12th of Brumaire anno III. (2nd of November 1794) an announcement to this effect appeared in the *Journal de la Montagne*, which was followed shortly after by a prospectus issued by Simonne, comprising all the political works of Marat, from the *Chains of Slavery* downwards. Marat's own presses, it should be said, were given over to the Jacobin Club after his death. A project for the republication of the most important of his political writings under the auspices of the Jacobins, in two volumes, had been seriously taken up again by Marat during the last year of his life ; and a prospectus of the undertaking, which appears in the Bibliothèque Nationale, bound up with a file of the *Journal de la République*, was issued early in 1793. It, however, came to nothing. Wishing at the same time to make a propaganda, and to assist materially Simonne Evrard, the Cordeliers presented themselves, on the 20th of January 1794, at the bar of the Convention with an address, the purport of which was to republish Marat's political works at the national expense. The petitioners were honourably received, but

the petition was referred to the Committee of Public Instruction, in the archives of which it remained buried. The project of Simonne, above spoken of, which was announced ten months later, also met with no adequate response, and so came to nothing. As to another work promised at the same time, bearing the title conceived by him in London in 1791, the *Ecole du Citoyen*, and intended to be a *résumé* of the principles on which the *Ami du Peuple* was based, whether it was in the form of a selection of articles or portions of articles from that journal, or whether expounded afresh expressly for the work by Marat himself, it is difficult to say, for the manuscript was subsequently lost.

The two women, Albertine Marat and Simonne Evrard, continued, as stated, to live together in Paris; first of all in the Rue St. Jacques, No. 674, and afterwards, as their means became still more limited, in a single small room, 33 Rue de la Barillerie, opposite the Palace of Justice. Their mainstay, and indeed only certain means of support, was an interest of 570 francs a year, derived from the wreck of Simonne's fortune. This was supplemented by the slender resources derived from their own handiwork. For the rest, they both lived in obscurity, seeking help from no one, and their one ideal and object of interest lay in the past. Simonne Evrard died on the 24th of February 1824, in consequence of a fall down a staircase. Albertine Marat survived her by nearly eighteen years. On the

6th of November 1847, the following notice appeared in the *Siècle* newspaper :—"The sister of the famous Marat has just died, at the age of eighty-three years, in a garret in the Rue de la Barillerie, in the midst of most profound misery, having no one beside her on her death-bed but a grocer, her sole heir, and a portress, the only friends remaining to her. This lady, whose features strongly recalled those of her brother, lived for a long time on the proceeds of her industry in making hands for watches, a kind of work in which she is said to have excelled. She was well acquainted with the Latin language. Age having come with its infirmities, she had fallen into great distress. Four neighbours and friends accompanied her remains to the public burial-ground (*fosse commune*)."*Sit terra levis.* Villaumé, the author of a careful and excellent history of the French Revolution, visited Albertine in her old age, and it was to this young law-student, for such he was at the time, that Marat's sister handed over a collection of the political works of her brother, arranged in twelve volumes by himself. Annotated as it was by the hand of the "People's Friend," it naturally formed an invaluable material for the future historian of the Revolution. After the death of Villaumé it passed into the Solar Library, and subsequently, on the dispersal of the latter, into the hands of Prince Napoleon. In a sale of the Madaillac Library in January 1885, it appeared among the lots, in what way is doubtful, and was

purchased, it is said, by an American collector for 2450 francs (nearly £100).

The physician Raspail was shown by Albertine Marat the original Solar microscope and other physical apparatus of Marat, as well as a batch of his medical papers and a complete file of the *Ami du Peuple*, containing the manuscript marginal notes of its author. These mementoes she promised to leave to him, but owing to untoward circumstances he appears never to have become the actual possessor of them.

The only present representatives of the Marat family are descended from the youngest brother of the "People's Friend," Jean-Pierre Marat, born in 1767. His eldest son bore the name Jean-Paul-Darthé Marat,—Jean-Paul, of course, after his famous uncle, and Darthé after the colleague of Babeuf in the celebrated conspiracy of 1796. He died in 1845, leaving a son, also named Jean-Paul; the latter by a curious coincidence, as Dr. Cabanés remarks (*Marat inconnu*, p. 274), had a long career as a functionary in a side of the administration of his native town specially concerned with the maintenance of order and the conservation of property, being Director of the Public Registers at Geneva. According to Dr. Cabanés, in 1889 the Geneva librarian, M. Théophile Dufour, interviewed M. Mara, at his request. He found him almost blind, so much so as to be unable to read or write. He refused to reply to

several questions put to him concerning his great-uncle, respecting whose life he professed to know little. He stated that his great-aunt Albertine had left to his father Marat's medical diploma, his ring, and his hair, besides an autograph manuscript. Of M. Jean-Paul Mara's brothers, one died childless in 1878, while the other, Lucien-Charles-Etza Mara, born at Geneva in 1837, was at the time of the interview (1889) residing at Saint-Nazaire, the father of two daughters and four sons. Of the latter, one, Jean-Paul, was employed as a bank-clerk in Paris, where also one of his sisters who was married was living. The elder M. Jean-Paul Mara of Geneva has only two daughters. The brother of Marat, who took the name of M. de Boudry on entering the Empress Katherine's service in Russia, left two daughters, it is stated, who were married to Frenchmen living in Russia, but of their descendants we have no information. So much as to the recent history of the Marat family.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION

THE immediate effect of Marat's assassination was to seal the fate of the Girondins alike in Paris and the departments. "We are all dead men," were the words uttered by every Jacobin on hearing the news of the murder of the great leader of the Mountain. Marat had always seen the necessity, in the crisis through which France was passing, of something like a dictatorship, and had voted for strong powers being given to the Committee of Public Safety when that body was formed as an organ of Government on the 10th of March. He was, however, very dissatisfied with its *personnel* up to the date of his death, as we have seen in Chapter VIII. As a matter of fact, up to his death the Paris Commune had continued to take the lead in initiating popular movements outside the Convention, and even in forcing measures on the Convention itself. Mr. Belloc, it is true, tries to prove that the movement from the 31st of May till the 2nd of June was really wire-pulled by the Committee, using



the Commune rather as its tool than itself taking its cue from the latter body. The evidence he adduces, however, for this view seems to the present writer utterly inadequate, even were the view itself not rendered intrinsically improbable by the weak character of the bulk of the members at this time composing the Committee. Certainly, until a better case is made out for reversing it, the traditional view, that this great movement had its active principle in the Paris Municipality, and more especially in Marat, will assuredly hold the field. But while the death of Marat gave a powerful impetus to the Jacobin movement all round, it paved the way for the future dictatorship of the Committees in the person of Robespierre. The accounts as to when Robespierre was elected upon the Committee of Public Safety vary, but the most accredited statement puts it on the 10th of August, while the *Moniteur* makes it the 26th of July. In any case, the influence of Robespierre could not have grown as it did with the criticism of Marat behind it as a counterpoise. Marat was timely removed out of Robespierre's way. As we know, although perhaps the greatest individual force with the Revolutionary Paris sections, Marat was elected to no other office after he became a member of the Convention, nor had he any party in the ordinary sense, *i.e.* a definite body of men within the Convention or outside of it, who uniformly or even generally acted under his leadership—such, for example, as

Robespierre, Danton, and Hébert had. For this reason, the death of Marat meant the extinction of the influence which Marat had exercised. On one side, therefore, the path lay open for Robespierre and his partisans. It only remained for Robespierre to rid himself of his two rivals on the road to dictatorial power—the Dantonists and the Hébertists—and indeed it was no very long time before friction between these two mutually antipathetic parties began spontaneously to show itself. The Committee meanwhile acquired new functions, but the Commune, with its “Revolutionary army,” organised to enforce the maximum, etc., practically dominated the situation in Paris for some time afterwards. The power of the Committee nevertheless grew continuously, and with it steadily grew the influence of its now most prominent member—Robespierre.

The only strong centralised force in France had hitherto been that of the Municipality, with the Revolutionary Committees of the Sections acting in concert with it. A new dictatorial power, that of the two Committees of Government, the Committee of Public Safety and the Committee of General Security, the first being the initiative body, was now steadily working towards the assertion of its independence alike of the Convention, where the strength of the Dantonists lay, and of the Commune and the Sections, where the strength of the Hébertists lay. It was necessary, in order that the Com-

mittee might become the dictatorial element in France, that both these rival powers alike, with those who at the moment exercised the leading influence in them, should be destroyed or made subservient to the two Committees of Government; and the ascendancy of the two Committees of Government meant at this juncture the domination of the man who had already acquired the dangerous reputation of incorruptibility—in other words, of Robespierre and his party. All this, in fact, happened. The first overt signs of friction between the Robespierrists on the Committee and the Hébertists on the Municipality may be noticed on the occasion of the initiation of the new atheistic cultus of Reason by the latter. Robespierre frowned and ostentatiously held aloof from the proceedings when Mademoiselle Candelle, surrounded by the acolytes of the new worship and followed by the municipals, defiled into the Convention Chamber. More at this juncture he durst not do. The power of the Commune had not yet been shaken, and in the concluding weeks of 1793 the innovating worship spread over all France and into the newly-acquired territories of the French Republic. The new year came and went. Then arose the demand of the Dantonists for the cessation of the Terror.

Robespierre was apparently at first on their side, against the Hébertists, his now declared opponents—the *enragés*, as he termed them. But the treacherous faithlessness of his character

soon showed in its true light. The Hébertist leaders perished indeed by the guillotine, to the joy of the Dantonists, but a fortnight later Danton and his friends also fell under the same ruthless axe, the instrument of Robespierre's ambition. Then came the undivided rule of the Committees, which meant the domination of the "Incorruptible" himself. The so-called "Great Terror" followed, enlivened by the feast of the Supreme Being, the Robespierrean counterblast to the worship of Reason. This, the culminating moment of Robespierre's personal ascendancy, was followed by the beginning of his decline, as indicated by the dissensions in the Committees. The final struggle for the supremacy, this time with his own colleagues of the Committees, now alone remained; and this struggle, as we all know, ended in Thermidor and the destruction of Robespierre and the Robespierrists. But the fall of the dictator,—the tyrant, as he was at that moment universally called,—proved the beginning of the end of the Revolution as a distinct event, till the restless but steady sweep of the tide of reaction carried all before it, save those bases of the nineteenth-century world—Individualism, Competition, and the Reign of Capital—to establish which was the historical function of that great episode of universal history we call the French Revolution.

In spite of the reactionary political garb which society took on at the opening of the

nineteenth century, the forms of feudalism proved impotent to arrest economic progress or to effectively put back the hands of the clock. Feudalism, as we have pointed out in the Introduction to this volume, had really been dead long before the French Revolution. But on the ruins of the old feudalism the forms of bureaucratic centralisation, built up for the most part of the same old feudal material, had supervened. The French Revolution marks the period when social and political life began to undergo that further change connoted by the transformation of a dead feudal society into the living bourgeois society of the nineteenth century. But though the material changed, the main forms of bureaucratic centralisation still remained, and remain even to the present day in their essential features. Hence it is here that the chief practical and up-to-date lesson of Marat's teaching comes in. The most prominent side of Marat's political life was his distrust of all officialism. His ceaseless *défiance* was based on the view, on which he untiringly insisted, that no faith whatever should be placed in the bureaucrat or the official *as such*,—that he should be trusted no farther than he could be seen. Marat knew that the official person, the member of a bureaucracy, is by nature a liar. His position carries with it that he should be prepared to falsify fact in the interest of the bureaucracy of which he is a member. That Marat was right, Royal Commissions, Blue-books, and independent

investigations galore afford us evidence. Not so many years ago, on some facts being brought out on the evidence of prisoners with regard to a question of prison administration, the Home Secretary of the day begged the House of Commons not to attach any weight to the statements of convicts, which he represented as necessarily unworthy of any credence whatever ; but, on the other hand, to be always ready to accept the explanations of persons in authority, at least until they were traversed by the most conclusive evidence. Now this, we fear, is still the popular attitude towards the official class. It is the exact contrary of Marat's attitude, as it is of the facts of history and of comparative psychology. The convict, it is true—*i.e.* the man presumably of more or less criminal tendencies—may not be the most reliable of witnesses, but he is not necessarily or invariably a liar. On the other hand, the bureaucrat, the functionary, the official, is necessarily by instinct a liar and a prevaricator in matters which concern his colleagues and his department, even though in private life he may be a man of the strictest integrity and the most scrupulous truthfulness. Furthermore, for Marat, crimes committed under the guise of performance of official duty, and commonly condoned on this ground, or at most mildly censured as indicating an excess of zeal, were the most heinous of all crimes, and therefore demanded the severest punishment. The foregoing may be unpopular doctrine, but so long

as it is unpopular we venture to assert that pure and just administration will remain the exception in the body politic it has been up to the present time.

The foregoing pages should, we think, suffice to prove that Jean-Paul Marat, the "People's Friend," was neither a "demagogue" nor a "madman," but a statesman, who differed, however, from most statesmen in that he possessed definite principles to which he remained steadfastly loyal, and which he logically sought to carry into practice. The slanderous portrait of Marat as a person of "shady life," or still worse as an "inhuman monster," has already fallen to pieces at the first touch of criticism and honest investigation. But there are still writers on the French Revolution who, while not attacking Marat's moral character, but on the contrary giving him full credit for his good intentions, still affect to regard the "People's Friend," especially in the later portion of his political career, as "frenzied," or at best "unhinged," by the events of the time and the trouble he had passed through. The reader who has followed the history of his public life as presented in these pages will, we trust, have come to the conclusion that the evidence of mental disturbance is only less baseless than that of moral turpitude. Let any one study the two theoretical works which form the basis of Marat's political practice, the *Plan de Constitution* and the *Plan de Législation criminelle*, and then follow the application of the

principles therein laid down in the files of the *Ami du Peuple*, the *Journal de la République*, and the *Publiciste de la République*, and if he be in any way unbiassed he cannot fail to become convinced that he has before him the work of a consistent Rousseauite indeed, and therefore bearing on its face up to a certain point, the obsolescence of standpoint of the *Contrat Social*, but also the work of a clear political thinker, no less than of a noble-hearted man and a single-minded friend of the disinherited and the oppressed.

Marat, though not a Socialist, was a precursor of Socialism. The ideals of Marat's life, Justice and Social Equality, clothed as they were by him in eighteenth-century Rousseauite garb, have not perished because that garb is outworn, but will assuredly realise themselves sooner or later under the forms of that true economic freedom through collective ownership in the material bases of social life which is the primary aim of the international Socialist party of modern times.



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